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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the socialization experiences of novice Louisiana middle school teachers. With the middle school as the unit of analysis, it used the aeronautical metaphor to describe schools as organizations where new teachers' initial flight into teaching occurred. Data collection involved interviews with principals, mentors, and new teachers and classroom observations of new teachers. Data analysis indicated that four-year preservice university programs were not adequately preparing student teachers for the realities of the classroom or providing them with necessary classroom techniques. The gap between theory and practice was not adequately bridged by university professors or student teaching programs. The study also found that interdisciplinary teaming, when implemented to increase professional and collegial development, could substantially help new teachers during the socialization process. Schools across contexts which implemented teaming received some benefit, regardless of how the concept was viewed. Effective teacher socialization was the result of processes within the school, rather than the result of its individual components. The paper presents recommendations for research, policy, and practice. (Contains references.) (SM)

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**Beginning Teachers Take Flight:
A Qualitative Study of Socialization**

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Statement of the Problem

Descriptive studies of beginning teacher socialization experiences can be found throughout the literature (Fox & Singletary, 1986; Su, 1992; Gratch, 1998a; Gratch, 1998b; Wells, 1984; Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Jordell, 1987; Nigris, 1988). However, socialization studies within the context of effective schooling are few (see Kirby, Teddlie, Stringfield, and Wimpleberg, 1992). This study examines school effects and teacher effects through the case study approach and builds on the work of Kirby and colleagues (1992) and Teddlie and Stringfield (1993). Understanding the role of the socialization experience as it relates to the instructional effectiveness of the new teacher can be crucial to the implementation of a school improvement plan. If the beginning experience contributes to teacher effectiveness in the classroom, this will, in turn, contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school as the teacher is socialized into the school culture.

This qualitative study examined the socialization experiences of middle school novice teachers through interviews with principals, mentors, and new teachers and from the classroom observations of the new teachers. With the middle school as the unit of analysis, an aeronautical metaphor was used to describe the schools as organizations where the new teachers initial flight into teaching took place.

Theoretical Framework

The framework within which this study was conducted is from the field of school effectiveness research. Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) have identified three strands of school effectiveness research (SER). These include: *studies of school effects* that attempt to relate school inputs to school outcomes using increasingly sophisticated mathematical models; *'effective schools' studies* that describe the processes of differentially effective schools using the outlier and case study approaches; and *school improvement studies* that document the implementation and sometimes the success of school change efforts (p.26). This research was conducted as an effective schools' study.

Yee (1990), in her examination of teaching as a career, points out the difficulties facing the first year teacher, challenges which are unique to the field of teaching. In the professional fields of law and medicine, those new to the profession are given a systematic way to induct beginners in to the job, a job which demands competence in a complex arena as well as the ability to make hundreds of management decisions each day. Conversely, Yee (1990) notes new teachers are required to enter their first year of teaching with the same teaching load and same responsibilities as those many years their senior. Professional socialization has been shown to influence teacher quality and longevity. This socialization leads to identification with the school organization, allowing the teacher to take on the same goals and missions as the school. The job of teaching becomes an issue of loyalty to the workplace, thus, leading to a teacher's intent to stay in the teaching profession (Yee, 1990).

Along with a variety of appellations given to mentors, the act of mentoring has been defined in several ways. Peterson and Williams (1998) note that Shannon (1988) calls mentoring "a nurturing process" and "an ongoing, caring relationship" (p.730). Zimpher and Rieger (1988) state that mentoring conveys both a meaning and a function, in that mentoring is both a casual support system and also an educative function. Other researchers, as noted in Hawkey (1997) define mentoring in terms of teacher developmental stages. A common thread in all literature speaks to the need for facilitation, both in social support and also in professional guidance.

Research has shown that mentoring has a positive relationship to the retention of new teachers. The National Center for Education Information found that only 67% of nonmentored teachers, new to teaching, that is, five years or less, would still be teaching in five years (Odell & Ferraro, 1992). After a teacher-mentoring program was implemented, Odell and Ferraro (1992) found that 80% of mentored beginning teachers expected to still be in the classroom in five years. Likewise, Blair-Larsen (1998) contends that the more problems new teachers encounter, the more likely they will leave the education profession.

Methods and Procedures

Sampling Design

The research design called for purposeful outlier sampling using intensity sampling strategy (Patton, 1990). This strategy involves carefully choosing a sample which provides "information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely (but not extremely)" (Patton, 1990, p. 171). Intensity sampling is superior to extreme case sampling because deviant cases will likely distort the "phenomenon of interest." In other words, extreme case sampling may provide information that is so unusual that the findings may be disputed (Patton, 1990).

The question that guided this research examined the processes in differentially effective middle schools; thus, a sample which documents an intense manifestation of the effectiveness of the middle school, either more effective or less effective, will reveal the most valuable information regarding the processes in these schools which will result in

a positive or negative socialization experience. Stringfield (1994) emphasizes the importance of outlier sampling for those studies seeking to understanding extraordinary events, calling the detailed outlier study a "most efficient research design" when questioning "what sets an exemplar apart" (p. 73). The efficiency lay in the ability to detail descriptions in the area of interest, thereby adding a richness to the overall study.

This study will examine outliers which are more effective middle schools and those which are less effective. The disadvantage to this design is that typical schools, those which are the majority of schools in the total population, are not studied. However, by studying the processes in outlier schools, information gleaned will allow typical schools to more efficiently focus on those processes needing attention in their particular context.

School Effectiveness Index

School Performance Score (SPS). Each year schools in Louisiana are required to administer the state's LEAP 21 test (a state criterion referenced test). There are two components to the test, English Language Arts and Mathematics (school year 2000-2001 inaugurated the Accountability Cycle 2, where the SPS included all four LEAP 21 tests; that is English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies). The SPS, calculated annually by the Louisiana Department of Education, is determined by combining results from four index scores with their corresponding weights. The formula for the calculation of the SPS follows.

School Performance Score = The Sum of:

LEAP 21 index score	X	60%
Iowa Test index score	X	30%
Attendance index	X	5%
Dropout index	X	5%

The index scores for the LEAP 21 and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills were derived through conversion. Scores not included in the conversion were for students who were expelled, transferred to another school or received a grade reassignment. The conversion resulted in a listing of schools and their individual school effectiveness index (SEI) for a consecutive two-year period, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Conversion of Student Scores to School Index Scores.

Students' raw scores *	→ converted to	→ Students' scale scores **
Students' scale scores	→ converted to	→ Students' z scores **
Students' z scores	→ converted to	→ School's z scores **
School's z scores	→ converted to	→ School's index score**
School's index score	→ converted to	→ School's SPS score**

* Raw scores on CRT mathematics and English Language Arts are for 4th and 8th grade LEAP 21 exam and on NRT total battery raw scores for 5th, 6th, and 7th grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

** Scores are for each subject area and grade level.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Management and Finance, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Services, Planning and Analysis Section, 2000.

Establishing the School Effectiveness Index. Before a sample could be chosen, a school effectiveness index (SEI) needed to be assigned to the middle schools in Louisiana. The SEIs were derived through a linear regression procedure whereby the criterion variable, in this study the school performance score (SPS), was regressed onto three predictor variables, which for this study were percent of students in poverty, percent of minority students, and percent of special education students (Sammons, 1999; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993). The three independent variables (percent of students in poverty, percent of minority students, and percent of special education students) accounted for 66.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (1998-99 school performance scores) (Yuan, 2000).

The result of this regression was a set of both actual and predicted scores for every K-8 school in Louisiana. The difference between the actual score and the predicted score was the residual score, either positive or negative. The residual scores served as the school effectiveness index for this study.

Adjusted Scores. Research studies of school effects (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993) have used the strategy of adjusted scores in their study design. This strategy addresses the issue of internal validity in order to ensure that the

study is designed to measure what it was intended to measure, while eliminating any extraneous variables that might affect the outcome. Thus, variables which might be related to student achievement, other than the school processes under study, should be accounted for (Teddlic, Reynolds, & Sammons, 2000).

Variables controlled for in the present study are those related to student background; that is, SES, special education, and ethnicity. SES refers to the income and educational background of the students' families. Schools often do not maintain data from student SES and when data are available, they are often not accurate (Freeman, 1997). In the present study, SES is determined through data related to the number of students enrolled in each school's free and reduced lunch program. To enroll in the program, parents must produce information related to the family income. A school which has a high percentage of students enrolled in the free/reduced price lunch program will likely also have a high percentage of students living in poverty; therefore, the socioeconomic status of the school will likely be lower. For purposes of the regression analysis, the SES of each school was determined by the number of students enrolled in the free/reduced price lunch program at the school divided by the total number of students enrolled in the school (S. Kochan, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

Ethnicity and special education percentages were also predictor variables utilized in the regression analysis (Sammons, 1999; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993). The ethnicity variable was determined by the number of minority students at each school divided by the total enrollment at each school. The special education variable was determined in like manner. The total number of gifted and talented students in the school was divided by the total enrollment of students. Data indicating the total number of minority students and gifted and talented students were received through the Louisiana Student Information System, which is a self-report system, but also an audited system as part of the Minimum Foundation Program school funding system (S. Kochan, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

Sample Selection

Residual scores were received from the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Management and Finance, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Services, Planning and Analysis Section (Yuan, 2000). This study examined only those schools with some combination of middle school grades (i.e., 4-8, 5-8, 6-8, or 7-8). In order to standardize the residual scores, the sample of interest (all middle schools), were extracted from the total sample. The effectiveness of middle schools was determined on the basis of a sample using all schools in the state; therefore, the regression analyses utilized by the Louisiana Department of Education were not recalculated. Instead, using the SPSS statistics program, the residual scores of the middle schools were standardized into z scores ($\mu = 0$, $\sigma = 1$). This procedure yielded a list of middle schools with standard scores which ranged from -3.07 to -3.07.

In examining the distribution of residual scores for the school year (SY) 1998-99 data and looking for matched pairs of schools, it was determined that residual scores of $\pm .67$ yielded a sample large enough to select an adequate number of more effective/less effective schools. Residual scores of $\pm .67$ represent the upper 25% of the distribution and the lower 25% of the distribution (Lomax, 1992). The upper and lower 25% of the distribution constitute an appropriate definition of an "intensity sample." The upper and lower 25% of the distribution also approximates cut-off points used to determine more effective/less effective schools in prior school effectiveness research (e.g., Lang, 1991; Purkey & Smith, 1982; Scheerens, 1992). Following this line of thinking, middle schools with an SEI of $\pm .67$ were examined for possible inclusion in the study sample.

The final sample of five matched pairs of middle schools is found in Table 2. A formal request was made in writing to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction of the school system's Central Office in the district where the sample schools were located. The request outlined the research, its purpose, what schools in the district would be visited, which parties within each school would be contacted, and the method of that contact (i.e., interview, observation, and/or survey response). The request to conduct research also included where and in what manner the findings of the research study would be dispersed. All schools in Table 2 agreed to participate.

Phase One Data Collection

Research questions for Phase One data collection included:

1. What are the differences in the assistance and monitoring factors at more effective and less effective middle schools?
 - a. What is the level of administrative monitoring for beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
 - b. What are the differences in the hiring practices of the administration at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
 - c. What are the types of assistance given to beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

d. What is the role of the beginning teacher's mentor at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

Table 2. Matched Pair Sample for the Study.

PAIR	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	SIZE	MINORITY	SES	Z SCORE
1	Polar Flight	Northside	986	29.8%	54.6%	+ .72
	Blackbird	Northside	543	16.7%	36.7%	- .71
2	Barnstorming	Waterside	558	10.3%	31.3%	+1.24
	Mir	Riverside	715	14.7%	37.6%	-1.86
3	Cargo	Eastside	400	14%	42%	+1.79
	Kamikaze	Westside	458	12.8%	49.8%	-1.65
4	Concorde	Southside	687	75.9%	44%	+ .94
	Tupelov	Southside	686	67.2%	42%	-1.52
5	Stealth	Northside	940	54%	56.5%	+1.30
	Tailspin	Southside	697	67%	51%	-1.98

Objectives for Phase One data collection set out to:

- examine the level of administrative monitoring received by the beginning teacher.
- examine the level of assistance received by the beginning teachers.
- detail the system of induction and the mentoring program provided by the school.

Sample selection for Phase One data collection involved interviews with administrators and mentors. The principal or administrator in charge of the induction and assessment process at each middle school (refer to Table 2 for school selection) comprised the sample intended to measure administrative monitoring. The mentors who were assigned to the beginning teachers in this study formed the sample intended to measure assistance.

Data were collected through interviews with the administrator of the school's induction program, normally the principal, and interviews with the mentor assigned to the beginning teacher. Data were unitized, categorized, and then analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). An interview protocol was used to insure comprehensive interviews across schools. Questions were open ended and interviewees were probed to relate processes within the school which might contribute to the quality of the socialization experience.

Each site visit included an informal observation of the school operations. Overall observations of the school culture as a whole and the day-to-day rituals and dynamics of the school provided in-depth information of the system within which the new teacher works. Data collected during observation of the school organization detailed the framework of the beginning teacher's socialization experience. Data were analyzed using the constant-comparative method with particular interest in the similarities and differences in the organization and culture of more effective middle schools and less effective middle schools.

Phase Two Data Collection

Phase Two research questions included:

2. What are the differences in the new teacher's perception of the processes within the school in more effective and less effective middle schools?

a. What are the differences in the classroom performance of the beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

b. What are the differences in the new teacher's perception of the assistance, monitoring, and team building received during the initial teaching experience at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

c. What are the differences in the new teacher's perceptions of their intent to stay in the field of education at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

Objectives in Phase Two set out to:

- identify any differences in the components of effective teaching, including classroom management and instructional effectiveness, between beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and beginning teachers at less effective middle schools.
- probe, in-depth, beginning teachers' perceptions of the assistance, monitoring, and team-building received during the socialization experience.
- probe, in-depth, the beginning teacher's perceptions of those school process which will likely increase their intent to stay in the field of education.

Phase Two data were collected from several aspects of the beginning teacher's school experience (refer to Table 2 for school selection sample). Beginning teachers in the middle schools under study were observed in their classroom setting where data targeting the Components of Effective Teaching were collected. Interviews with those beginning teachers who volunteered to participate were also conducted to follow up from data collected during principal and mentor interviews. Moreover, interview probes were employed to elicit in-depth data.

Due to confidentiality concerns, administrators at the schools under study requested that special education classes not be part of the observations for the study. Many of the beginning teachers in the study were special education teachers. In an attempt at consistency and objectivity, two beginning teachers from each middle school under study were randomly chosen and solicited for permission to observe their teaching during two different class periods. Attempts were also made to observe classes with differing grade levels. Data from the observations were compiled using the scripting method, then transferred to the classroom observation instrument using the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (School Effectiveness and Assistance Program, 1999). The classroom performance indicates whether the new teacher works toward mastery of the components of effective teaching or whether the new teacher works toward management control with no goal of effective instructional strategies. Classroom observations of the beginning teachers provided information on effective instructional techniques (or the lack thereof) of the new teacher. This, in turn, led to conclusions regarding the middle school's climate: that is, whether the climate was devoted to learning and instruction or whether it was devoted to management and control.

Data in this phase were also collected from beginning teacher interviews. Those beginning teachers who agreed to participate in this phase were interviewed in 30-45 minute blocks. Teachers were probed to outline their perceptions of the assistance, monitoring, and team building they received during their initial year of teaching. Data from interviews were analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Both a priori and emerging themes were examined to look for differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools. Beginning teachers were interviewed to elude information regarding the needs, challenges, rewards, and successes of the initial years of teaching.

Findings

Organizational Processes

As part of the data collection, beginning teachers who volunteered to do so were interviewed regarding their perceptions of assistance, monitoring, and team building. Two elements of the organizational processes emerged which bear explanation. An understanding of the middle school concept of interdisciplinary teaming and the procedures advocated by Harry Wong is called for as beginning teachers pointed to these as impacting their successful socialization experience.

Middle School Concept of Interdisciplinary Teaming. Interdisciplinary teaming is commonly associated with the middle school level. Teams of two to five teachers, normally representing core disciplines (language arts, social studies, math, and science), share the same group of students, have a common planning time and teaching schedule, and are located in the same area of the school building (Erb, 1997; Manning & Saddlemire, 2000). Though team roles and responsibilities vary by school, effective teams usually emphasize caring, respect, and success (Manning & Saddlemire, 2000).

Research on the teaming concept (Lee & Smith, 1993) has concluded that students in teamed settings were more engaged and less bored, more often completed their homework, and were less likely to be aggressive. In this same study, students in schools which were more teamed and less departmentalized scored higher on standardized achievement tests in both math and reading. Teachers also garnered benefits from being members of teams. A sense of collegiality gave teachers a more positive outlook on teaching which led to an increase in teacher efficacy and a more positive professional self-image (Erb, 1997).

Not all middle schools in this study utilized the middle school concept of teaming ($n=5$) and, of those which did, three were less effective schools. However, as noted in the case studies, for those new teachers who worked at schools embracing this concept, teams played a substantial role in their socialization experiences in terms of collegiality and social support.

First Year Procedures Advocated by Harry Wong. Harry Wong, a former high school science teacher, is the author of *The First Days of School*, a book based on Dr. Wong's lectures on the importance of classroom management (Starr, 1999). Wong focuses on classroom management as a key to student achievement, positing that classroom routine and procedures ensure that students know what is expected of them. Procedures are vital because children cannot learn in chaos (Starr, 1999).

Several major concepts are discussed in Wong's book, including some of the following: (1) start each class with an assignment, rather than by calling roll; (2) position yourself near the students because problems are proportional to distance; (3) rehearse procedures with the students until they become routines; (4) ask a question after 10 sentences then wait five or more seconds for responses after asking a question; and (5) you can have achievement or you can have excuses (Wong & Wong, 1998).

Not all beginning teachers interviewed referred to the work of Dr. Wong. However, some of the new teachers interviewed for this study reported Wong's work as part of their teacher preparation program or as a part of the school system's induction. Those teachers who reported reading his book and utilizing his concepts also reported more success in first year classroom management.

Metaphors in Qualitative Research

Patton (1990) and others (e.g. Eisner, 1998) have called for the use of metaphors to summarize complex sets of situations, behaviors, and patterns. Metaphors are used as a way of "communicating the connotative meanings of analytic categories" (Patton, 1990, p. 400). Powerful and clever metaphors can convey meanings with a single phrase. Throughout the case studies from this research, a metaphorical name will be given to the schools and, in the cross case analysis, to the new teachers and appropriate others. Two of five case pairs (four of ten case schools) are documented in this paper; that is, two schools on the fringe of an urban area which focuses on interdisciplinary teaming and two schools on the fringe of a mid-sized city which focuses on school leadership.

Teachers, upon graduation from their university preparation program, are flying high. These teachers enter the school system idealistic and ready to impact the lives of children. Once assigned to their crew (the faculty) and led by a pilot (the principal) and a navigator (the mentor), the beginning teacher is prepared to take flight. The resulting socialization experiences of that first year greatly depend on the flight plan of the aircraft to which the new teacher is assigned, the collegiality and support of the crew, and the leadership of the pilot and navigator.

Pair 1: Two Schools on the Fringe of an Urban Area Barnstorming Middle School

Introduction

After World War I, demobilized airplane pilots, searching for employment, became stunt pilots. These highly trained aviators took their knowledge into the lives of the average American through exhibitions at county fairs, racetracks, and anywhere people would pay a fee to see them fly. The stunt fliers were known as "Barnstormers" because they often flew into cow pastures and slept in barns. Barnstormers frequently improvised in creative ways to keep the plane flying, such as repairing a broken wing spar with a piece of pine from a fruit crate or using the steel barrel of a fountain pen for an engine arm (Lopez, 1995). Teamwork and invention led the barnstormers to face overwhelming odds to reach their goals and, though a dangerous occupation, success was often their reward.

Background Information

West of a major urban center in Louisiana, Waterside Parish sits at the mouth of a Corps of Engineers Spillway. Surrounded by swamps, bayous, and the Mississippi River, Waterside Parish is aptly named. Waterside Parish is well known for its superb educational system, one which advocates high expectations for children and participatory decision making for its employees. The schools in the Waterside School System commit to the mission of the parish to provide high quality educational opportunities for the children.

A two-lane highway, called the River Road, curves along the levee protecting the area from the Mississippi River. Just across the River Road sits Barnstorming Middle School, not far from the foot of the interstate highway exit. An older building, circa 1970s, Barnstorming's main area is surrounded by temporary buildings. The school's mission, posted on the front doors to the school, greets visitors. The mission reinforces the idea of teamwork, a theme which is reiterated throughout the data collection. The mission says that all members of the school community,

should work as a team to meet the needs of the middle school child. The purpose of this team effort is to establish a climate of mutual respect conducive to the intellectual, emotional, moral, so-

cial and physical development of the child. The educational opportunities and experiences afforded each student during his or her school career are the joint responsibilities of this team.

Housing approximately 558 students, only 9%, or 50 students, are in special education. The other 91%, or 508 students, are in regular education classes. One third of the students (31.3%) are of minority race and 40.2% of the students come from lower SES households. The school has consistently performed well, with a School Performance Score (SPS) of 102.5 in SY 1998-99, garnering a Performance Label of School of Academic Achievement. With a predicted SPS of 95.44, Barnstorming's SEI is +1.24, making it the more effective school in Pair 1. The SY 1999-2000 SPS of 102.3 remained almost unchanged from the year before. The class sizes are evenly divided with 34% in classes of 1-20, 33% in classes of 21-26, and 33% in classes of over 27 students. The attendance rate at Barnstorming is higher (96%) than the state average (94.6%). The dropout rate of .2% is much lower than that of the state (2.3%). While 37% of teachers statewide attained a master's degree, the Barnstorming faculty had 43% with master's degrees.

Contact with the school was limited to the assistant principal, Mrs. Irving. The first encounter with school personnel was a somewhat bungled one, with Mrs. Irving aware of, but unprepared for, the visit; however, subsequent visits were well planned and productive. The concept of middle school teaming as implemented at Barnstorming was explained before data collection began. While other middle schools in the study implemented some version of teaming, nowhere was the vision of teaming more enthusiastically embraced by every staff member than at Barnstorming. Each teacher at Barnstorming was a member of two teams, a grade level and a learning team.

The grade level team was determined by the grade and the discipline taught. For example, the seventh grade has two teams. Each team has a math teacher, a science teacher, a language arts teacher, and a social studies teacher. Each team teaches the same students. There is also an enrichment period during which the team participates together. All teachers on the same team have the same planning period and are required to meet for 45 minutes each day.

The learning team is a group of teachers with common interests, not necessarily in the same discipline or with the same grade level. The focus chosen by the group must, in some way, be related to the school's goals. For example, a group of teachers who were interested in the use of manipulatives formed a team. They focused on how manipulatives can help the student progress through math, discussed activities with manipulatives and why they are worthwhile, and studied student's work with and without manipulatives to gather data regarding the usefulness. Teams also formed around technology, action research, and other professional development areas.

On Wednesday mornings students arrive at school an hour later than on a normal day. During this time, the learning teams meet. Teachers refer to this time as the "faculty study time." As part of the school's professional development program, teachers are sometimes called upon to present their findings, or the progress of the learning teams, to the rest of the faculty or, perhaps, to the school board members at the monthly meeting.

Barnstorming also has implemented the district initiative of the responsive classroom. As a part of this initiative, there is a daily morning meeting or advisory period, called a CPR, that is, Circle of Power and Respect. There are four components to the CPR, which include: (1) news and announcements, where the teachers inform the students of school news; (2) greetings, where the students greet each other; (3) sharing, where students are allowed to share whatever they chose; and (4) activity, normally something fun with which to begin the day. According to Mrs. Irby, the CPR sets the tone for the day for the children.

Beginning Teachers at Barnstorming Middle School

There were four beginning teachers at Barnstorming Middle School, all who volunteered to be interviewed for this study, as seen in Table 3. All four teachers reported that they selected Barnstorming for employment because there was a job available for them there and they were anxious to teach in Waterside Parish.

Assistance

Waterside School System was the exception to the other parishes in the seriousness with which they took their obligation to induct the beginning teachers. Waterside held a week long induction inservice right before the fall semester started. Topics addressed during the week include the teacher's job description, the program areas upon which the district places the greatest importance, and the benchmarks. As part of the induction week, the new teachers spend a day at the schools where they will teach. Mrs. Irving said that during the induction week when the new teachers arrive, the team members with whom they will serve are there to greet them. After Mrs. Irving meets with the beginners and goes over the handbook, she gives them a tour of the school. The team members then take the new teacher to his/her classroom, show him/her the supplies, and make a list of the supplies and materials the new teacher thinks are needed. Finally, the team meets as a whole and discusses the curriculum of their discipline at Barnstorming.

Basic questions were asked of every candidate but team members are encouraged to generate questions of their own. Mrs. Irving stressed the importance she places on eliciting the applicant's views on instruction, classroom management, and parental involvement. The process for choosing who will be interviewed begins at the Waterside Central Office. Personnel from the school system visit job fairs throughout the state to accept applications, then initially screens them through the human resources department. Once appropriate candidates for the parish are selected, a stack of applications is sent to the schools, determined by need. The principal, assistant principal, and one member of the team then select who they will interview. Mrs. Irving reported that the team, as a whole, looks for certain criteria.

There are several things. Whether or not they have a philosophy of the middle school teacher, whether or not that person feels comfortable working with a team, not just the knowledge base but a very good knowledge base. And then there's always a question of classroom management and feeling comfortable at the middle school level because it's a difficult level.

Team Building

As previously explained, the middle school concept of teaming played a significant role in the everyday lives of the new teachers. As such, Miss Ireland often turned to the members of the team for professional and social support. She looked to the other team members as her informal mentors. The members of the learning team provided critical resource help.

As special education and inclusion teachers, Mrs. Issacs and Mrs. Ingram did not belong to grade level teams. Therefore, the members of their department served as informal mentors and purveyors of resources. The learning teams, for them, were helpful in information and knowledge, rather than actual classroom resources.

Whether the source was the grade level team, the department, or the learning team, all of the new teachers at Barnstorming reported other faculty readily helping them, rather than having to procure support and resources on their own. Mrs. Ingram called it a "reliance on colleagues." Lack of concentrated mentor support was not observed as a lack of concern on the mentor's part but rather as a by-product of the teaming concept. Both the mentor and the beginning teachers accepted this as a part of the way the school worked.

School Culture and Colleagues. As the concept of the learning team was explained, it was clear that the work of teaching was discussed often and the discussions were carried in to the classroom. Miss Ireland's team discussed various activities using math manipulatives, took these activities to the classroom, then charted data to determine the effectiveness of the activities on overall math achievement.

In a conversation with Mrs. Irving regarding the importance of the team members to the new teachers, I asked whose job it was to address the concerns of a teacher who had difficulty fitting in with the faculty. She replied,

It's everybody's job. The whole school needs to help the new teacher fit in. I would say, specifically, it falls on the administration and the team to help that new teacher out...[during team time] not only are academic things talked about but also just, how are things going in the classroom? So they give feedback to each other, assisting each other. And I think that this kind of builds a camaraderie. And last year, I did see a teacher who was not fitting in with her team. And my questions were to the team, 'How are you helping this person? What are you doing to make this person feel more comfortable?'

When asked about the school administration's openness to new teachers observing the veterans teachers, Mrs. Irby replied that the administration encourages the practice. At times, Mrs. Irby has recommended to the principal that a particular new teacher be given time off from class and a substitute provided by the school, for the purpose of observing veterans. Mrs. Irby reported that the school is amenable to this. However, most new teachers are not. As Mrs. Irby said,

The only thing that I find is that the new teachers are so conscientious and so wonderful that they find it more difficult to have a sub come in to their rooms to be freed up to do observations. They find it more difficult because they have to leave plans for a sub. Sometimes with what they're planning to do, they're not comfortable with a sub doing. So it's like double planning for them. So, it's like they say to me, "oh, gosh, I'll give up my planning period. I don't want to go during a class period." And that's admirable.

Mrs. Irby said the administration, of course, submits to the new teacher's wishes. However, the new teacher then misses the experience of watching a veteran work.

Intent to Stay

Challenges of the New Teacher. Six interviews were conducted at Barnstorming. When asked about challenges, the mentor and two beginning teachers reported that classroom management caused the greatest concern. The ad-

ministrator and two of the beginning teachers stated that handling responsibilities outside of teaching was the greatest challenge. Miss Ireland believed classroom management was the most difficult for her because "there's so much to learn when you actually get your own classroom and it can be very overwhelming." Mrs. Indest agreed. She stated that most new teachers "have learned their subjects and theories of teaching and managing a classroom" but replicating college work into a real classroom can be a jarring experience. Even though student teaching experiences may offer similar conditions, Mrs. Indest commented that

the presence of the students' 'real' teacher keeps students' behavior somewhat in check and gives the student teacher someone to look to in moments of indecision. When beginning that first job, the new teacher must not only plan rules and consequences, but also how to respond when things don't go according to plan. They should think through some worst-case scenarios. I don't think new teachers do that.

Mrs. Irby, a proponent of the CPR (see Background Information section), states that while these morning meetings go far toward building mutual respect and diminishing classroom problems, they still exist. The beginning of the school year, before these relationships are established, are particularly difficult for the beginning teacher and management. However, according to Mrs. Irby, Barnstorming helps the new teacher through conferencing, prior to an actual problem occurring. She stated,

So basically what we do is we talk about an instance, a 'for real' life instance that may have happened in the room and talk about what could have been done to solve the problem in a more constructive way.

The two special education teachers, on the other hand, see duties, outside of actual teaching, as the greatest challenge. Mrs. Issacs called it "stuff that doesn't have to do with my class." In other words, "stuff" such as special education documentation and paperwork required by the school system. Mrs. Ingram explained,

We have to present to faculty, to central office. It's for professional growth and development. And I'm all for that stuff but my question is - and now we have parish tests for math - you have to grade the test. Then you have to sit down and make a document saying who got what wrong for every student. And you're expected to go back and re-teach it but you don't have time...And then you have to cover the whole book. That's the biggest thing. It's just all the other stuff.

The administration sees this frustration in new teachers. Mrs. Irving believes that new teachers don't really know what is required of their time when they enter the field.

They're overwhelmed by the number of things that they have to do and the number of things that they have to be involved in. For instance, you may have to be a sponsor of a team. You're not just a teacher. You may have to stay after school to tutor students. Papers have to be graded. There may be an astronomical number of them. Then our district has criteria for the way you grade certain things. And so I don't think they come in knowing those kinds of things.

Mrs. Irving commented that Waterside Parish was very hands on, as far as district requirements for teacher's instruction. While the requirements were beneficial for increased student achievement and teacher professional development, these criteria also presented challenges. Mrs. Irving explained,

Our parish has gone to scoring essays using the LEAP [state CRT test] rubric, whether you are teaching science or social studies, it doesn't matter. We encourage you to use that so that students will know that once this is how it is being used in the classroom, that can carry over in to your assessment for LEAP. But, if you don't know that coming in, and you are a first year teacher, and you are instructing in math, you are expected to give some sort of essay that pertains to math. And that's something that you have to score.

Mrs. Irving suggested that university preparation programs might address this for new teachers by offering more "real world" experiences before student teaching.

Beginning Successes. Mrs. Indest and Miss Ireland were pleased with the relationships they had established with their students. Miss Ireland said that "the parents tell me they really enjoy the class and they have a lot of fun in my class. That kind of thing makes me feel good." Mrs. Ingram and Mrs. Issacs also believed they had achieved success with their students but for other reasons.

Mrs. Ingram, in particular, was protective of the special education students she taught and was especially proud when they succeeded.

Watching children in special ed who have been told all of their lives, whether it was insinuated or directly told, realize that they can do and they can learn and they can go out in the regular class. And they can do the 8th grade work or the 7th grade work and when you see the lights go on like, my God, it makes you feel good.

More than successes in teaching, Mrs. Issacs found success in seeing students grasp social skills and increase their self-esteem as a result.

I think that's more important than the materials in the textbook that I have. For a lot of these children, the environments that they come from, you can give them all the math drills, all the language arts drills you want. But until they are OK with themselves, emotionally, or their self esteem, they're not going to learn.

Mrs. Issacs related a story about a student who was traumatized by a shooting and how this became a learning experience for both the student and the teacher.

We had one that we both [Mrs. Issacs and Mrs. Ingram] taught that was involved in a shooting and watched his friend get shot and buried in a ditch. You can't teach during that. So both of us took him in the back and watched him cry and helped him grieve...It was still a learning experience. It might not have been science or social studies. But there was some form of education taking place...This child now knows where he can go and who he can go to. He knows that people care about him. That child made a difference in our lives, too.

Thus, the new teachers viewed the successes of the child as their own.

The View of the Profession. All four beginning teachers at Barnstorming enjoy teaching and view themselves as professionals. The beginning teachers stated that their "work was important" (Mrs. Ingram), that they "take the job seriously" (Mrs. Issacs), and that "seeing the students respond to what we are doing is a joy" (Mrs. Indest). Miss Ireland felt she was acting as a professional because she was able to "see the results of [the instruction] and that they're achieving."

Holding Power. When asked what held them to education, each stated that the desire to teach was intrinsic and they stay because that is what they have chosen for their career. As Mrs. Issacs said, "Teaching is inside me."

School Processes

The emphasis on teamwork and learning is evident on entry to Barnstorming Middle, where the mission statement of team work in an atmosphere of mutual respect is practiced daily. The school community promotes excellence and is proud of the achievement of the children. The walls of the main hallway are lined with trophy cases filled with school awards. A display table at the corner holds ceramics made by children in the art classes. The bulletin board is filled with news clippings about the school and with a section devoted to "School Toons," that is, cartoons about the school and some caricatures of faculty members, all drawn by Barnstorming students. At the immediate entrance to the school, just outside the main office, is a large suggestion box, where parents, also a part of the team, can give input to the administration.

From the central office to the newest teacher, excellence and achievement are a part of the culture. Excellence becomes not merely a goal, but an expectation. This aspect of the culture gave pause to some of the beginners as they saw this expectation as an additional pressure. Mrs. Ingram commented that.

The pressure is from the state and it trickles down. You know, I think part of the stuff from the system, from the district that Waterside Parish has always been at the top. And we don't have unions and so, we paid you this much money and we kept you at the top and so we expect this standard from you. And here's all of the extra stuff that we are going to have you do because it's compensation.

Nonetheless, all four teachers reported that even with the pressure to excel, none would choose to leave the parish.

Instruction at Barnstorming Middle School. Two eighth grade Louisiana History classes, one seventh grade math, and one eighth grade pre-Algebra class were observed. Creativity was the byword in the social studies classes as Mrs. Indest sent her students on a "Mission Impossible." Using cooperative grouping, with each student assigned a task (Commander, Runner, Time Keeper, and Writer), students used an atlas, physical maps, and political maps to find out where the headquarters of the spies were located. Students did so with clues provided by the teacher. When a geographic location was correctly found, the group runner received another clue to the whereabouts of the headquarters. The winning group was rewarded with candy treats. The students had an exciting class as they learned geographic map skills.

In both math classes, students were continually challenged to think and affirmed for doing so. As Miss Ireland assigned two problems to introduce a lesson on probability in the seventh grade math class, she told the class, "They're challenging. Don't give up. Try for me!" Students were praised as they worked ("Jerry asked a good question." "You know how to do this.").

High expectations for the seventh graders were evident as they made frequency tables and discussed theoretical probability. A discussion of options and outcomes prompted an explanation of experimental probability. Before the

students were given their assignment, Miss Ireland asked them to compare experimental and theoretical probability. The students were able to articulate the difference in their own words.

Metaphorical Synopsis

While no element of the school stood out in marked superiority to other elements in the school, all areas of Barnstorming permeated excellence. The emphasis on professional development by the school district molded teachers who had knowledge and training geared to increasing student achievement. The efforts succeeded, as seen in high test scores and an enthusiasm for learning in the children. A highly trained crew can overcome great obstacles, as demonstrated by the barnstormers in history as well as the barnstormers in Waterside Parish. However, as with the risks taken by the barnstormer pilots, teachers at Barnstorming were concerned that as excellence became an expectation, rather than a goal, the teachers were sometimes overwhelmed with the demands made upon them.

Team work was a priority at Barnstorming, just as it was for the barnstorming aviators of the 1920s. Teachers relied on each other and together formulated optimum strategies for increasing student learning. Though the students were not without need, as indicated in the stories told by Mrs. Issacs and Mrs. Ingram, care and nurturing of the child were ingrained in the teachers at Barnstorming. Learning teams and instructional teams gave new teachers the professional, social, and resource support necessary for a successful "flight plan."

Creativity in instructional strategies also played a part in the excellence that permeated Barnstorming. Encouraged by the administration to take risks, with the goal of increased achievement, teachers were empowered to use invention in order to help the child excel.

Training, creativity, and teamwork all combined to create a successful learning environment for the children of Waterside Parish. The barnstormers in the classroom, led by an enthusiastic pilot and navigator, worked together to perform stunts designed to educate the whole child. The reputations of the World War I pilots were of skillful aviators, willing to take risks, in order to succeed. The crew of Barnstorming is developing just such a reputation.

Mir Middle School

Introduction

As part of a new era in space exploration, Russia built a 143 ton space station in 1986. The space station called Mir was a source of pride among Russians. Nonetheless, the station, over its lifetime, was beset with many problems. Accidents, a near-fatal collision, and drastic funding cuts eventually caused its demise. After orbiting in circles for 15 years, the station plunged to the earth on March 23, 2001, some parts of it destroyed, some parts of it forever lost in space (AP, 2001).

Background Information

Mir Middle School is located in Riverside Parish outside of an urban center in Louisiana. The area is a historic one, the site of several battles in American history. Museums and plantations intermittently dot the landscape. However, the community itself is surrounded by, and the lifeblood of the residents depend on, the industrial area which surrounds the main highway that runs through the parish. The Mississippi River provides easy access for the barges which service the area industries.

In addition to the industry and the tourism, Riverside Parish depends on commercial fishing for its livelihood. Most of the community earns a living in blue-collar jobs which provide a comfortable lifestyle. Access to Riverside Parish comes from the main east/west interstate or by ferry from the urban center across the river.

Mir Middle School is located in a lower middle class neighborhood just off the main highway which runs through the industrial section. The architecture of the school is that of a flat roofed, square building, associated with those built in the 1970s. The school has a large glassed breezeway that provides sunshine and an open air feeling as the students walk to class. On entering the breezeway, however, the area becomes a trap for the heat from the sun. Mir houses students in grades six through eight, with a student population of 715 (612 in regular education; 103, or approximately 12%, in special education). The minority population of the school accounts for 14.7% of the total school population and 37.6% live in poverty.

According to the Louisiana Department of Education, in SY 1998-1999 Mir was labeled as an Academically Below Average school, due to a School Performance Score (SPS) of 64.3. An SEI of -1.86 SD was assigned based on the predicted SPS of 90.27. Noteworthy is that the SPS in SY 1999-2000 increased to 83.8, though still not as high as the predicted score for this school. In Pair 1, Mir was designated as the less effective school. The attendance rate of 90.9% is well below the state average of 94.3%, while the dropout rate (.7%) is significantly better than the state (2.3%). Few teachers at Mir go on to receive advanced degrees, only 13%, compared to other middle schools in the district, which average 22% of the faculty possessing advanced degrees. Class size at Mir is much larger than other middle schools in Riverside School District. Core classes in the district averaged 21-26 students in

31% of the classes and over 27 in 51% of the classes. At Mir only 22% of the core classes had 21-26 students. Most classes (71%) had 27 or more students. Class size above 26-27 has been shown in a number of studies to be a negative indicator of student success (Glass & Smith, 1979; Eisner, 1998; Rutter, Maugham, Mortimore, Outson, & Smith, 1979).

Mir Middle has also instituted the middle school concept of interdisciplinary teaming. Classes meet in ninety minute blocks, teachers are assigned to grade level teams, and each team is organized by core subjects. However, while the structure of teaming exists at Mir, the philosophy of teaming has not been embraced. Beginning teachers did not report the existence of learning teams, in addition to the grade level teams, nor did teachers report daily meetings with the teams.

On my initial visit to Mir, the principal, Mrs. Jennifer Jackson invited me to arrive before school started so that we could map out the day. Since school began at 8:45 a.m., I arrived at 8:30 a.m., hoping to visit with Mrs. Jackson before her day started. As students entered the school, few teachers were observed in the hallways, monitoring students. The bell rang for the beginning of school, announcements were made via the intercom by a student, and there was a moment of silence. Classes started and Mrs. Jackson had still not arrived. Questioning the secretary, I was informed that she would arrive shortly. At 9:10 a.m. Mrs. Jackson breezed in, greeting everyone as she came through the office. With no apology or explanation, she invited me in to her office to give me the new teachers' schedules for the day.

Beginning Teachers at Mir Middle School

There were four beginning teachers at Mir Middle, all who volunteered to be interviewed (see Table 4).

Table 4. Teachers at Mir Who Volunteered for Interview

TEACHER	SUBJECT	POSITION SELECTION	UNIVERSITY	DEGREE	EXPERIENCE	CERTIFIED
Janice Jefferson	Science	Job was available in January	Our Lady of Holy Cross	B. A.	1 year	Yes
Julie Jenson	Science	Job was available	LSU	B. A.	1 year	Yes
Jamie Johnson	Math	Job was available	Mississippi University for Women	B. S.	1 year	Yes
Jocelyn Jones	Social Studies	Knew faculty at Mir	Southeastern Louisiana University	B. A.	2 years	Yes
Teacher		Position				
Jennifer Jackson		Principal				
Joy Jagneaux		Mentor				
Jane Jacoby		Mentor				

*Experience includes current school year

Assistance

During the year prior to the present study, the Riverside School District piloted a new teacher induction program. New teachers were removed from the classroom for one day each semester and substitutes were hired to cover their classes. These full day workshops, along with half day workshops once a month, provided new teachers with information ranging from the state assessment program to how to handle a parent conference to classroom management strategies. Only one of the four teachers I spoke with, Jocelyn Jones, participated in this program. Miss Jones described it as helpful and as a way to receive professional development without being overwhelmed all at once. The program ended after one year because the district concluded that it was a poor idea to remove new

teachers from the classroom so often. Moreover, the cost of substitutes for the new teachers became prohibitive. As a result, during the current school year, the district induction program was downsized to a one-day workshop.

Both mentors and new teachers agreed that the current district and school induction programs were informal ones. A couple of days before school started a one day workshop was held at the Riverside School District Central Office. The content of the meeting covered insurance, district policies, and a viewing of the Harry Wong video (see discussion under **Findings** section). At Mir, teachers reported a variety of induction efforts at the school. Mrs. Johnson reported her induction consisted of a tour of the school by Mrs. Jackson the day she was hired. Miss Jenson said the other teachers were going to a workshop in New Orleans so the principal sent her as well so she could get to know the faculty and gain knowledge from the workshop, too. Janice Jefferson was hired in January so she reported no official induction from the school or the district.

Mentor Support. All of the new teachers who were interviewed stated that they had to teach for approximately four weeks before a mentor was assigned to them. During the first few weeks without a mentor, they were forced to figure out the system on their own or solicit help from fellow teachers. All of the teachers also agreed that once they were assigned a mentor, the contact was neither frequent nor regular. Miss Jenson offered that she'd only met with her mentor once and had only been observed for about half a class, feeling that the mentor offered her little help. Mrs. Johnson stated that her meetings with the mentor were "just occasional - kind of nonchalant. Not really a set time at all. We could go several months without any communication." Mrs. Jefferson agreed that the only time the mentor met with them was when it was time for the official observation.

While all four teachers reported that the mentor met with them only sporadically and only observed their classes once or twice a semester, as required by the state, the mentors had a different view of the relationship. Mrs. Jacoby, a veteran of over twenty years in the school system, stated that she made frequent informal observations, often "popping in" the classes, which she did with the entire faculty as part of her role as curriculum coordinator. Mrs. Jacoby viewed a part of her job as helping the new teachers locate activities, and learn "teacher tricks." Additionally, the principal, Mrs. Jackson, sent Mrs. Jacoby to workshops, rather than allowing faculty members to miss class to attend. Mrs. Jacoby then shared materials that she received from the many workshops with the rest of the staff.

Mrs. Joy Jagneaux, the other mentor, saw her role as one to guide new teachers to work toward better relationships with the faculty and the team on which they serve. She wanted to make the teacher feel good about what s/he's doing and encouraged each not to give up. The new teachers did not mention this as a function of their mentor. Rather, the principal was mentioned more often in the role of social supporter, along with other teachers.

Monitoring

The administration at Mir was not proactive in the selection of new teachers to the school. The Personnel Director at the Riverside School System Central Office attends Job Fairs at the local universities to recruit new teachers, then offers the beginners a choice of schools in which they might be interested. If an opening occurs in the middle of the school year, the Personnel Director sends out letters to those students in the student teaching semester, informing them of the nature of the opening and the school that has the opening. Because the district is so close to an urban center with a poor school system reputation, the district would seem to be in an optimal position for recruiting. However, according to the administration at Mir, the school receives a large number of uncertified teachers sent to them from the district. In response to a question about the number of certified teachers in the school, I was told

It's hard to keep young people in this profession because the pay is so low and the working conditions are not always so great. We're getting a lot of young people who were not trained for education. We've got Teach for America people. Last year we had a whole fleet of young people come in - one who had graduated in journalism, another graduated in communications. They had never had a methods course. They had never done student teaching. That experience is valuable.

Cursory observations throughout the school during a site visit to Mir Middle School confirm the view that Mir has teachers who were obviously not trained as educators.

Team Building

Three of four teachers interviewed agreed that informal mentors were more integral to their first year survival than was their assigned mentor. From the informal mentors, beginners received both professional and social support. Though support was received once solicited, the teachers noted that they first had to seek it out. The help and/or resources were not freely offered. The teachers who were informal mentors were either the chairperson of the department to which the new teacher was assigned or a member of the team on which the new teacher served.

School Culture and Colleagues. Discussion of the "work of teaching" by faculty members was limited to current lesson plans and the success of these plans, according to all four teachers. They did, however, note that this

type of discussion was common. New teachers did not observe other veteran teachers because, they surmised, the teaming concept made doing so difficult. The provision of substitutes for observing at a time other than their planning period was unavailable. Moreover, since all grade level teachers have the same planning period for team meetings, if a veteran were observed, it would have to be at a grade level the observer did not teach.

Intent to Stay

Challenges of the New Teacher. The problems of new teachers, as articulated at Mir Middle, were as many and as varied as the participants who were interviewed. The most vocal consensus centered around the challenge of proper classroom management. The new teacher mentor, Mrs. Jacoby, stated that many new teachers use detention as a first and last method, failing to understand the difference between discipline and punishment. Mrs. Jacoby believed discipline was more than a classroom policy. She equated the level of classroom discipline to the level of discipline in the young person's life. Mrs. Jefferson, an elementary certified teacher, felt her difficulty lay in coming from a student teaching experience in elementary school to Mir where she had to discipline eighth graders.

Time management loomed large for Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Jefferson, and Miss Jenson. All three said there was never enough time to do all that was required of them. A major problem for Mrs. Johnson, one that was under the control of the school, was having four class preparations. She never seemed to get more than a day ahead of her class. Miss Jenson's problem with time management began to take a toll on her. She shared that "the reason I cried the first three months of school was because I was working 18 hours a day. I mean, I'd go home and I didn't have a life." Mrs. Jefferson was simply unprepared for the number of papers she had to grade.

The day-to-day workings of the school caused frustration for the novices. The correct way to set up a roll book, the correct way to make out a report card, and the correct method to complete a cumulative folder are all activities within the purview of the school's administration to educate the new teacher. However, the mentor and the novice had different views on how to deal with this. One mentor, Mrs. Jacoby, stated,

Who knew that you had to do a cum folder in black ink? I didn't know. Nobody told me. I did mine in blue. I was there 'til doomsday writing in grades because nobody taught me. Some of it you just have to learn through experience.

Miss Jones concurred on the problem but not the solution.

I totally messed up my grade book the first nine weeks. And that's just something they don't cover in college classes. You know, the technical things. My mentor didn't cover that with me. Couldn't she have?

While Miss Jones felt the problem could have been alleviated and stress ultimately reduced for the new teacher through mentoring in the basic operations of teaching, the mentor took the attitude that this was on-the-job training because that is how she learned. This viewpoint harkens the adage "I had to go through it. Now so do you."

Beginning Successes. Three of the four teachers interviewed attributed their successes to seeing their own students succeed. Stories of unmotivated students who were now trying were told, along with the story of a student who overcame problems at home to successfully complete a class, were viewed as personal successes by the novice teachers. Only one teacher, second year teacher Miss Jones, saw success in herself. In looking back over the past year, she stated,

I've grown. Last year I found that I grew in one area mainly - classroom management. This year I've grown in so many different areas. The scope just widens a lot in the second year. I've grown in meeting deadlines a little bit earlier this year and I guess being more responsible for my team and ...forming relationships.

This mirrors the advice of Mrs. Jacoby to new teachers; that is, to persevere. Mrs. Jacoby says that if new teachers know that they will make mistakes but that these mistakes can be overcome, they will survive.

The View of the Profession. Though Miss Jenson and Mrs. Jefferson readily agreed that they loved teaching and would stay in the profession, Miss Jones was a little more cautious. She stated that she loved the subject of history more than she enjoyed the "job of teaching." Miss Jones disliked the technical aspects of the profession such as homeroom folders and grading papers. Somewhat ambivalent, Miss Jones said she could probably be happier in another job but also enjoyed the challenge of teaching. Mrs. Johnson was the most outspoken of the new teachers regarding the field of education - a field she had no intention of pursuing in the future. Mrs. Johnson's husband wanted to pursue a degree so while "teaching is not my ideal...I thought what's the quickest degree I can get and get out of here. So it was mainly just a means to an end to get out and graduate."

Holding Power. Miss Jones and Mrs. Jefferson believed that the key to holding teachers to the profession was money. Riverside Parish, an industrial center, provides a job market that is both plentiful and high paying. Realizing this, Miss Jones stated that she could be making more money and not bringing home any work if she worked in industry, rather than education. Mrs. Jefferson frankly said it was depressing to see secretaries with fewer skills and

less education make more money than she did. Only Miss Jensen said a love of the job is what holds her to the profession. She said that teaching comes from the heart.

Since I was seven years old, I've known that I want to be a teacher. But even so, the first three months of school, it was such an adjustment. I cried. And my dad said, 'Quit. I'll pay for you to go back to school.' And I was, like, 'What else will I do?' There's nothing else that I want to do. Even if I go back to school, this is what I want to do. I want to be a teacher. But it's really hard.

School Processes

Though all four teachers and both mentors agreed that the principal was caring and supportive of the faculty, no one mentioned the principal as an instructional leader. The extent of beginning teacher monitoring was limited to that required by the state assessment program. Mrs. Jackson was never observed by me outside of the office area.

During change of classes, few teachers were observed in the hallways monitoring students. An exception was the change time after lunch. Several teachers stood by the stairwell as students walked up the stairs to the sixth period class. One teacher was observed coming in to the main building from lunch, quickly followed by a student who was challenging the teacher regarding an incident in the cafeteria, one for which he was being turned in to the office. Announcements about an Eighth Grade Dance and an Art Club Sale lined the main hallway but there was no evidence of student work anywhere outside of the classrooms.

Instruction at Mir Middle. Four classes were observed during the spring semester at Mir Middle School, two math and two social studies classes. In each case, at least once, and during one class more than once, during the instructional time, there was an interruption; either a student delivering a note to the teacher or another student, an intercom interruption, or a student in the classroom coming in late or leaving early. The teachers seemed to take this in stride as a normal part of each class period. Overall, the classes were large, though none observed for this study held over 27 students. Transition time was slow in all classes observed and students were easily led off track. An example of this occurred in one eighth grade Louisiana History class. The students were watching a video provided by the D-Day Museum on the Invasion of Normandy. A wasp flew into the room. Several students, as well as the teacher, were involved in the extended killing and disposal of the wasp; meanwhile, the video continued to play.

The casual climate modeled by the principal was also evident in the classroom. At the beginning of one class period when the seventh grade math teacher, Mrs. Johnson, was collecting homework, she informed the class that if they did not have their homework, that was fine. They could turn it in the next week. Before the class broke in to groups to work more problems, the teacher opened a discussion with the class on how well they liked the layout of the textbook for that particular chapter.

The overall lack of academic press in the school was best exemplified in the eighth grade math class. The students were quite animated about the project on which they were currently working, called "The Sugar Baby Project." The premise was that the females in the class had just found out they were pregnant (and in the case of the males, that their girlfriend was pregnant). The students were given a copy of a checkbook balance sheet and occasionally, throughout the project, Mrs. Johnson deposited "funds" in their accounts. The students were to budget, write checks, and balance their checkbook. The homework that was returned to them on the day the class was observed was a sheet of construction paper on which the students had pasted catalog pictures of baby furniture that they intended to buy. On the day of the observation, they brought newspapers and coupons to class and were shopping for baby food. An argument may be made for the practical life lessons that this project offered to these adolescent students. However, as high school loomed ever closer for these eighth grade students, the skills required to balance a checkbook or the construction of baby furniture collages offered little preparation for higher level math.

Like the hallways of the school, student work was rarely found on the walls of the classrooms. The walls of the social studies classroom were bare. The math classroom had paper fishes hanging from fishing line from the ceilings. The fishes were colored on graph paper, a project that the teacher explained was a lesson in counting the cells on the graph paper and the coloring was "just for fun."

Metaphorical Synopsis

Much like living in a space station, the novice teachers at Mir Middle School were Lost in Space. Serious about their work, and with the potential to one day be fine teachers, in the learning climate at Mir, they were merely muddling through. Though the teachers reported that teaching was a frequent topic of discussion, the "lounge talk" I overheard centered around the price of tickets to an amusement park and the scope and fear factor of the rides.

The principal of the school obviously cared for the teachers from the perceptions of the novices. However, a love of children never surfaced as a priority in a discussion with anyone, not even in the new teacher's explanation of why they intended to stay in teaching. There was some discussion by the mentor of respect given to children in return for respect received, within the context of classroom management. Yet, the welfare of the child seemed sec-

ondary to the beginner's self-imposed role of survival. Every day tasks, such as record keeping, which veteran teachers could easily address with the new teachers, were viewed as tasks the novice had to learn through experience. In the classroom, academic press was sacrificed for fun. Just as the space station was beset with problems, so also were the beginning teachers at Mir Middle. Without the guidance of a mentor or an instructional leader, these new teachers floated through the year, working in Mir and lost in space.

A Comparison of Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools

Interdisciplinary teaming was part of the organizational structure at both Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools. However, the concept as implemented at each school was vastly different.

Teams are a part of life at Barnstorming, from teacher selection to instructional strategies to collegial support. From the first day of school, beginning teachers understand that they will be a part of a team. Learning teams aid in professional development, while grade level teams deal with student problems, parent concerns, and instructional ideas. Beginning teachers realize that though they are autonomous in their classroom, they are never alone because they are a part of a community.

Teachers are encouraged by the Barnstorming administration to share in decision-making through teaming. One of the new teachers at Barnstorming was concerned about teaching seventh grade one day, then eighth grade the next, a result of the block scheduling. Discussion with her team members resulted in the decision to teach the seventh grade for four weeks, then the eighth grade for four weeks, switching with the other team members. Rather than questioning the decision and the adjustment, the administration encouraged and applauded the cooperation of the team members to help the beginning teacher.

Interdisciplinary teaming is also a part of the school organization at Mir. However, beginning teachers at Mir view the concept as a structural one; that is, they define teaming as all grade level teachers meeting at the same conference period, rather than viewing it as an opportunity to share ideas and support one another. New teachers at Mir did not report any instructional or classroom management help from the team members. One teacher indicated that her roll book was incorrect for the first nine weeks because no one instructed her on how to complete it. Another new teacher commented that she cried for the first three months of school because no one would help her. Two of the four new teachers reported turning to the principal for social support because they perceived it was not available anywhere else for them. Mir did not incorporate learning teams as a part of the interdisciplinary team concept.

As a result of teaming, the mentor at Barnstorming took more of a background role, providing support when needed, but encouraging the new teachers and the team itself to work for the success of all members. Likewise, the principal fulfilled the requirements of state mandates for principal monitoring, but, in addition to the minimum requirements, also demonstrated leadership through shared decision-making. The administration urged the team to take on the roll of instructional leadership as well as professional development through the learning team.

Conversely, the beginning teachers viewed the mentors at Mir negatively. One new teacher reported that after seven months of school, she'd only met with the mentor once. Another teacher stated that she did not get much help from the mentor in any area. Though personally supportive, the new teachers did not perceive effective instructional monitoring from the principal. The predominant goal of the classes appeared to be ensuring that the lesson was fun, rather than the primary goal of learning and achievement.

As outlined in Table 5, general *a priori* themes from Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools point to several differences. The category of mentoring assistance refers to the level of professional, social, and resource help provided by the school's official mentor. Even though interdisciplinary teaming played such a large role in the school's organization, the mentoring assistance at Barnstorming was effective and overall support early in the year. By design, the mentor eventually allowed the grade level team to take on the induction of the novice. Mir's mentor, in the opinion of the beginning teachers, was ineffective. Administrative monitoring refers to the level of instructional assistance, as well as the leadership provided by the administration in increasing student achievement. Though advocating shared decision-making and reliance on the team, Barnstorming's administration, nonetheless, provided instructional leadership which allowed the faculty to successfully implement the teaming. Mir's principal, on the other hand, provided social support but no instructional leadership. Team building was an integral part of Barnstorming but was only of average help at Mir, as perceived by the beginning teachers.

In addition to school effects, teacher effects were also examined in this study. Classroom observations examined instructional strategies in light of the components of effective teaching. Instruction at Barnstorming was creative, effective, and geared to increasing student achievement. Seventh grade math students at Barnstorming were observed discussing the difference between theoretical and experimental probability. While there was instruction taking place at Mir, it could not be considered effective, as demonstrated by the seventh grade math lesson. The Sugar Babies Project, while instructive, were designed for student enjoyment, not student achievement.

Table 5. General A Priori Themes at Barnstorming and Mir Middle.

SCHOOL	MENTORING ASSISTANCE	ADMINISTRATIVE MONITORING	COLLEGIAL TEAM BUILDING	EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION
Barnstorming (ME)*	↑	↑	↑	↑
Mir (LE)*	↓	→	→	↓

*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Legend: Effective: ↑

Ineffective: ↓

Holding Steady: →

Specific a priori themes include the additional areas of challenges faced by the beginning teacher, successes of the beginning teacher, teacher intent to stay and interdisciplinary teaming. There were few differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of these themes across contexts, other than their perception of teaming as implemented at their school. Table 6 documents the specific a priori themes as perceived by the beginning teachers at Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools.

Table 6. Specific A Priori Themes at Barnstorming and Mir Middle.

SCHOOL	GREATEST CHALLENGE		GREATEST SUCCESS		INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMING	INTENT TO STAY		
	Discipline	Other	Student Success	Other		Intend to Stay	Intend to Leave	Intend to Stay but not at present school
Barnstorming (ME)*	2	2	3	1	X	4	0	0
Mir (LE)*		4	3	1		2	2	0

*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

The challenges and successes are documented by frequency of mentions. Teachers at Barnstorming were evenly divided over whether discipline or paperwork was the greater challenge. Teachers at Mir cited time management and adjusting to "the real world" of teaching as challenges. All but one of the teachers at both schools reported that the children's successes were their successes. One teacher at Mir reported self-growth as her greatest success. Interdisciplinary teaming was documented from interview data.

Table 6 also notes the number of beginning teachers at each school who intend to stay or leave education. This intent is based on the teacher's perception at the end of the current school year. As outlined, all of the new teachers at Barnstorming intend to continue in the field, while only half of the new teachers at Mir plan to stay in education.

Pair 2: Two Schools on the Fringe of a Mid-Sized City Polar Flight Middle School

Introduction

In 1926, Richard Byrd, a Commander in the U. S. Navy, successfully completed the first flight to the North Pole. The aircraft was fitted with special fuel tanks to increase their capacity, and thus, increase the range of the

flight (Lopez, 1995). Though navigation was difficult, Byrd proved himself as a focused and disciplined leader. With no landmarks, Byrd relied on a sun compass, a reversal of a sundial, to act as the plane's directional (Lopez, 1995). Byrd was an adventurer and sent out to explore dangerous areas, previously uncharted. However, despite these challenges, Byrd provided a solid foundation for his crew, ultimately leading them to a successful flight.

Background Information

Polar Flight Middle School is located in the small town of Corcoran in Northside Parish. Like the majority of the population of Northside Parish, the people of Corcoran are largely descendants of French-speaking Acadians. Though located just off the interstate between Houston and New Orleans, Corcoran is easily bypassed by travelers. Thus, most business is local and related to the oil and gas industry.

As part of the Northside Parish School System, Polar Flight was directly affected by the United States Department of Justice's desegregation lawsuit against the school system of the parish. During the 1999-2000 school year, the school system was found to be surreptitiously disobeying the law by operating a racially identifiable school system. Four new schools were built during the 1998-1999 school year in direct defiance of the U.S. Department of Justice 1967 decree which stated that, under the desegregation order, court ordered permission must be sought before any school construction could begin. This construction, according to a Dallas-based consultant for the Justice Department, further segregated students by raising the number of racially identifiable schools from 16 to 19 (Billiot, 2000). The result, when the issue was brought before the U. S. District Judge, was that two predominantly black schools would close, black students would be bused to predominantly white schools, black principals would be placed at predominantly white schools, white principals would be placed at predominantly black schools, and teachers would be transferred in order to racially balance teaching staffs (Billiot, 2000).

Polar Flight Middle School felt the impact of this judicial order through the teaching staff, both losses and gains, and a loss of some students to other schools. A new African-American assistant principal was assigned to Polar Flight during the 2000-2001 school year, as well as new African-American faculty members. While the issues associated with desegregation lay like a cloud over the school, teachers also face challenges from the student body, particularly those fifth grade students who enter the school for the first time. The majority of the student body comes from a cross-section of small country towns across the area known as Acadiana. Therefore, upon entering Polar Flight in fifth grade, students come from several elementary schools in several communities, most of which are rural. These new students come with differing levels of achievement and experiences at the elementary level into classrooms where the novice must teach to some semblance of homogeneity.

Located in the middle of the business district of Corcoran, surrounded by a Catholic church, a cemetery, and a middle class neighborhood, Polar Flight is a modern brick structure in front, which has been added on to the older part of the school in the back. Housing almost one thousand students, Polar Flight is so large that there are two teacher's lounges, three separate full size school buildings and a host of portable buildings. Despite its size and the problems inherent to large schools, during instructional time, the hallways are quiet and clean.

There are 986 students in grades five through eight at Polar Flight. Regular education students number 869 (88%) and there are 117 (12%) students in special education. Of these students, 29.8% are minority students and 54.6% of the students live in poverty. Though Polar Flight is located in a small town, its Johnson code designation (NCES, 2000) is urban fringe of a mid-sized city. The Louisiana Department of Education has labeled Polar Flight as a school which is Academically Above Average, with a School Performance Score (SPS) of 80.4 during the 1998-1999 school year (SY). A regression analysis predicted a score of 79.29 for Polar Flight. The residual score is a +.72 SD, making Polar Flight the more effective school in Pair 2. During SY 1999-2000, Polar Flight continued to improve with an SPS of 90.1. Both the dropout rate (2.5%) and the attendance rate (94.5%) are about average for the state (2.3% and 94.3%). Likewise, the class size is average, with 67% of the classes containing 21-26 students in each class. Slightly more faculty at Polar Flight (38%) has masters' degrees than the state average (37%).

The initial visit to the school verified the first impression of the principal I received from a phone conversation. The school was run efficiently and was a no nonsense organization. The secretaries greeted me graciously, showed me where to sign in, and where to wait until the principal was ready to see me. I observed, as I waited for the principal, that the office staff was never idle. Though friendly on the phone and with guests, there was a "well oiled machine" quality to their work. There were no students wandering the halls and no teachers loitered in the lounge. When the bell rang for change of classes, both assistant principals left their offices, picked up a walkie-talkie, and proceeded to monitor all hallways during the transition time. This was a consistent routine observed on all subsequent visits to the school. My appointment was set up for 9:30 a.m. and that was exactly the time that I was ushered in to the principal's office.

Beginning Teachers at Polar Flight Middle School

All four beginning teachers at Polar Flight volunteered to be interviewed for the study, as can be seen in Table 7. Though the mentor, Mrs. Crane, is listed as a volunteer for the interview, an interview never actually took place. Amid promised phone calls and broken appointment dates, Mrs. Crane's duties as the district's union representative did not allow time for an interview since the study took place during district budget talks and statewide threats of walk outs. Thus, data regarding the mentor is limited to the perceptions of the beginning teachers at Polar Flight.

Table 7. Teachers at Polar Flight Who Volunteered for Interview.

TEACHER	SUBJECT	POSITION SELECTION	UNIVERSITY	DEGREE	EXPERIENCE	CERTIFIED
Courtney Campbell	Lang. Arts	Substitute then hired full time	University of Louisiana	B. A.	1 year	No
Christy Cassidy	Lang. Arts	Recruited by Mr. Clinton	University of California, Los Angeles	B. A.	2 years	Yes, not in LA
Candy Collins	Special Ed.	Assigned by Central Office	University of Louisiana	B. S.	1 year	No
Connie Coussan	Lang. Arts	Recruited as a result of desegregation	University of Louisiana	B. A.	1 year	Yes
Teacher		Position				
Cecil Clinton		Principal				
Cathy Crane		Mentor				

* Experience includes current school year

Assistance

Three of the four new teachers interviewed stated that the only formal induction they received was a workshop, prior to the first week of school, held at the Northside School System's Central Office. All teachers agreed that the induction was only minimally helpful. Christy Cassidy, a beginning teacher in her first year in Northside Parish, was a second year teacher who moved to Louisiana from a school system in California. Having another system with which to compare the induction, she was very disappointed.

I went to one afternoon kind of thing with all of the new teachers and they gave us kind of your typical pep talk and welcome to the parish...I was actually very disappointed and very frustrated when I came away from it... My question was where are my content standards? And the answer was that we'll get those out to your school as soon as possible...So you're getting new spelling books this year. Well, do you have them yet? Do you have the teacher's manual for them? Well, no. We'll get those to your school as soon as we can. So it was pathetic.

One of the new teachers, Courtney Campbell, began the year as a substitute who was then hired as a full time teacher during the second six weeks of school. Therefore, she was not able to attend the district's one day workshop. The only induction she received was a meeting with the teacher she was replacing.

The principal of the school, Mr. Clinton, admitted that both the district and school level inductions were minimal. However, his philosophy was that, though it was important that the new teachers understand the policies and practices of the school, "setting a tone" during the first two or three weeks was just as important as a workshop. Mr. Clinton makes it a point to offer assistance through faculty partners or his own personal input during those first weeks because, in his view, that time is critical to how the classrooms will operate in March, April, and May. Mr. Clinton relied on his own compass to guide the new teachers through the beginning weeks of school, rather than expecting the district to do so.

Mentor Support. While all of the beginning teachers at Polar Flight agreed that their mentor, Mrs. Crane, was the most adorable person," they also agreed that beyond the requirements for the state, they did not have much contact with her. Teachers stated they received help from their mentor in writing the lesson plan for the assessment how to answer the questions for the interview. However, Candy Collins, a new uncertified special education teacher, noted that Mrs. Crane knew nothing about special education so she was no help with the district and state paperwork nor with writing the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Mrs. Cassidy called Mrs. Crane "a formal-though she admitted that the mentor's goal was to help them become better teachers.

In addition to her duties as mentor, Mrs. Crane was also the union representative for the Northside Parish schoolteachers. She often had meetings to attend regarding union concerns, particularly when the issue of teacher took center stage in the spring semester. As a matter of fact, I scheduled three different appointments with her and she canceled all three appointments. The semester ended with her promise to call me so that a phone interview could be conducted. The call never came.

The mentor's area of expertise is middle school science. None of the new teachers taught science. Therefore, the process of seeking help in their teaching area, beginning teachers turned to others for professional support as well as social support and resources. If the beginner wished to speak with the mentor, meetings had to be scheduled advance either before or after school.

Monitoring

Polar Flight has a reputation in Northside Parish as a school with a solid learning environment, coupled with strict discipline. Because of this reputation, in addition to referrals from the district's central office, teachers, both new and veteran, leave their resumes for the principal to keep on file. The school principal, Mr. Clinton, reports that this is an advantage in teacher selection. Along with the typical interview questions, Mr. Clinton also requires that applicants write a short paragraph explaining how they would be an asset to the school. This paragraph allows him to see the teacher's writing style and use of grammar as well as an informal view of their teaching philosophy and what is important to them. Mr. Clinton's emphasized the need for his new faculty, or crew, to make discipline and student achievement a goal. Finally, before seriously considering any candidate, Mr. Clinton calls the teacher's supervisor from the previous semester.

Mr. Clinton and his teachers stress the importance of his class observations. Along with the four formal observations that must be completed for the state, Mr. Clinton often "pops in" to the teachers' classroom. For the beginning teacher, this is sometimes a daily occurrence. However, the teachers who were interviewed seemed to appreciate this. Mrs. Coussan said that

It's good because I like to show off what I'm doing with my kids. I have a good group of kids and I'm very confident in the things that I do. It also gives me an opportunity to really see myself and not follow the formalities of being observed and the different things like that. And also gives him an opportunity to see me working with my kids.

Mrs. Cassidy agreed. She noted that the principal's expectations did not change, just because the visit was informal. He pops in all of the time. He's such a funny man, too, because he's always so serious...He'll go to your desk and you have to have your lesson plans right there and he'll grade them. They need to be done for the whole week, Monday morning. He'll walk through and sometimes he's here for 10 minutes and sometimes for 30 seconds, looks around and leaves...I think that's very cool that he wants to know what is going on. He doesn't tell you when he's coming in.

For the new teacher, knowing that the principal is interested in what goes on during class is appreciated. The teacher is always in top form, knowing that the expectations of the principal require that. The students observe that how they perform in the classroom is important enough for the principal to frequently visit. Mrs. Coussan also commented that the feedback is timely and the comments are constructive. The encouraging words of a principal in the first few trying months mean a lot to the new teacher trying to find her "professional face."

Team Building

Informal mentors played an important role in the initial year of teaching for the novices at Polar Flight Middle School. These mentors came from different roles and played different parts for each teacher but all new teachers agreed they could not have survived the first year without them. As a special education teacher, Miss Collins had two teacher's aides and a nursing assistant. One of the aides, an eight-year veteran of Polar Flight, was with the same children last year. She helped Miss Collins with the routine and matching the students' IEPs with the lessons. While Mrs. Coussan depended on the Language Arts teacher next door to her, Mrs. Campbell relied on the fifth grade counselor, particularly during standardized testing. Mrs. Cassidy's partner, Mrs. Connery, was the social

this school, in particular, is run so well and I do have so much support and I feel safe here....I think it comes from Mr. Clinton but I think everyone appreciates that part of it....It's all about the education here and educating the kids.

Mrs. Campbell, as a 665 employee (a temporary employee, hired under the Interim Emergency Policy on a one year basis, degreed but with no Praxis scores), seemed most appreciative of the school, knowing that the possibility existed that she may be assigned to another school the next year.

I think the school's got more potential than a lot of schools out there to be the best. I really do...This school really energizes me...I learn something new every day, just like the kids do...Whether it's out of a book or an experience...So I think this is where I am meant to be. This is God's plan. This is my calling.

School Processes

Polar Flight Middle School is all about learning. Student work covers the hallways. On several classroom doors were pictures of the students in the class or decorative colorings with the students' names drawn on them. On one door were colored fishes that students had designed with their names on the fishes and a sign that said, "Come swim through fifth grade with us!" While the hallways were quiet, the classrooms buzzed with teaching.

Student discipline was evident throughout the school. During the transition time between classes, administrators roamed the halls and teachers stood in their doorways, greeting students as they entered. On one visit to the school, during this transition time, two large male students had words with each other. As one began to remove his jacket, ostensibly to ensue fighting, there were immediately three teachers surrounding them to diffuse the situation. No threats of suspension or detention were made. The teachers spoke to the students, though in commanding voices. The students moved to class and a fight was avoided.

Instruction at Polar Flight. Four Language Arts classes were observed, two at the fifth grade level and one each at the seventh and eighth grade level. During all classes, students were engaged and active learning was observed. There was a high degree of respect evident in all classes, for the teacher and for each other.

Display of student work was common in the classrooms I visited. The Language Arts class had post cards on the door with the students' names on them. Posters made by students, entitled "What do Good Readers Do?" adorned the walls. While there were motivational prints on most walls, they were overshadowed by the colorful work of the students.

Teachers at Polar Flight Middle exhibited high expectations for their students and observations validated that the students worked hard to live up to these expectations. One fifth grade Language Arts Block demonstrated this. Mrs. Cassidy, their teacher, informed me that at the beginning of the school year these students could not define a summary. They could not articulate that the word "sum" meant "add together". The majority of the fifth grade students came to Polar Flight Middle from several surrounding rural elementary schools. According to the teachers at Polar Flight, these rural schools were not known for their academic press. Therefore, the fifth grade teachers at Polar Flight began the year modifying behavior, attitudes, and readiness for learning. Empowering the students to define the rules for behavior and the rubrics for grading stimulated discussion about the teacher's expectations for the year, as well as the student's. Consistency in these expectations molded the attitudes of the young people to value the educational adventure they began that year.

Mrs. Cassidy believed in conducting her classes in an atmosphere of student empowerment. At the beginning of each lesson one student was appointed to time her. She was allowed fifteen minutes to introduce the lesson (though, she informed me, this time varied according to the difficulty of the concept introduced). After her allotted time was up, the students took over. If there were questions, students raised their hands and the questioning student called on another student to answer the question. In this way students were motivated to pay attention, not only to receive information but in order to answer any questions other students may have. Mrs. Cassidy only interjected if clarification was needed or if members of the class could not answer the questions. She said this method placed importance on the students' participation as learners and teachers as well.

The students in the class I observed had moved from understanding the concept of summary at the beginning of the year to reading novels for their "Literature Circles" in the spring semester. This day students had completed their work on a novel and were constructing a rubric before they moved into the "Literature Circles." The students gave a name to each rating and an explanation for how the student might attain that rating. After much discussion the final scoring guide was 4 = We've Got the Power; 3 = Still My Kind of Person; 2 = Dude; and 1 = My Bad. The teacher then had the students review a basis upon which to assign each rating.

Prior to that day, every student was given a job for his or her "Literature Circle." Each circle had four students, each of whom had a different job. The "Predictor" told the circle what s/he believed was going to happen next in the book. The "Connector" told the circle what s/he believed their assigned reading had to do with their world and their

lives. The "Summarizer" summarized what they read so far. The "Questioner" asked the group questions on what they had discussed so far. Each job was put in writing for the teacher to grade. While the teacher graded their "job", the students graded each other on participation, according to the scoring guide the class drew up.

Just prior to moving into the "Literature Circles", Mrs. Cassidy asked the students three questions: What does it mean to listen? What is a thoughtful answer? What does it mean to participate? After class discussion, they quickly and quietly moved into their groups. As the "Literature Circles" met, discussed literature, and questioned each other, the teacher moved from group to group asking her own questions, encouraging debate, and prompting students to justify the answers they gave. As she left each group, Mrs. Cassidy shook the hands of each group member and thanked them for their knowledge.

As the class grew to a close, two of the groups invited me to join their circle. One group wanted to tell me about the book they were reading. The other group asked for my input on their "connector" discussion. The students were serious about their work but delightful in their enthusiasm for reading. They were anxious to tell me about the books they were reading at home. After the students returned to their desks and had graded each other on participation, Mrs. Cassidy told the class how proud she was of their participation and that they had earned the privilege of having an outside "Literature Circle" for their next novel. Beginning the year not knowing the meaning of the word summary to group discussions of literature, I observed that these fifth grade children had traveled far on their academic flight.

Metaphorical Synopsis

The Polar Flights to Antarctica and the South Pole were dangerous flights, ones in need of a leader to guide the crew through treacherous weather. As commander of the flights, Byrd was the indispensable and fundamental foundation which the crew required to keep them focused on the mission. The principal of Polar Flight Middle is that "piece" of the school which unites all facets of the community – the teachers, the students, the parents, and the community at large.

One of the keys to success for Polar Flight Middle School rests in the office of the principal. The school runs like clockwork with an emphasis on learning, following the goals and expectations of Mr. Clinton. Ever serious and rarely smiling, Mr. Clinton walks the hallways more as Commander Clinton. Somewhat meekly, Mrs. Campbell confessed she was a little intimidated by the principal. However, she and all of the other new teachers knew that their welfare and the welfare and best interests of the children were priorities for him. As one teacher stated, Mr. Clinton "is all about the kids." For Mr. Clinton, the fundamental basis of their work was increased achievement for the students. This vision for what is important and where the priorities for the school should lay is conveyed beyond the office of the principal and into the classrooms, where effective instruction was evident.

Forced to seek informal mentors because of the other obligations of Mrs. Crane, the mentor, the beginning teachers at Polar Flight, nonetheless, found the support they needed to successfully complete the year. These informal mentors, who acculturated the novices to the school community and its every day workings, became another key to success for the beginning teachers. Effective teaching was evident in the classrooms of the new teachers. An obvious love of children, along with high expectations for their success, rank these beginning teachers as a vital part of the crew who work to weather the storm and successfully take their students to greater achievement. Three of the four teachers attribute their desire to stay in the profession to their experiences at Polar Flight Middle School, affirming that the novices and their instructional leader together provide a solid foundation for the children whom they educate to eventually take flight on their own.

Blackbird Middle School

Introduction

Blackbird was a huge reconnaissance plane which flew high and fast. The speeds at which the plane flew heated the plane's surface to dangerous levels, so much so that corrugations in the wing had to be added to avoid warping (Time-Life, 1999). Imposing in size, the pilot of this towering jet had to wear a 40-pound pressure suit to prevent blackouts and give the pilot a chance of survival if forced to eject. As a spy plane, details about it were vague. Called a "surreal craft," its appearance was deceptive and, at first glance, the aircraft was not what it appeared to be (Time-Life, 1999). The Blackbird was a craft under pressure whose outward appearance disguised its true nature.

Background Information

Like Polar Flight Middle School, Blackbird Middle School is located in Northside Parish. This section of Northside Parish is in a predominantly rural area and farmland and sugar cane fields surround the school itself. Pastures with grazing race horses can be seen from the windows of the school. These horses are the livelihood of

many of the parents of students at Blackbird, who raise or train horses and are employees of the local racetrack. Unlike Polar Flight, the issues and backlash of the desegregation problems of Northside School System evaded Blackbird (see Polar Flight Middle School case study for a discussion of the Department of Justice order for Northside School System).

Blackbird is a huge brownstone building built during the 1950's with the original hardwood floors and thick oak doors. An old school with a great deal of local history attached to it, Blackbird Middle School is an imposing structure on a rural highway. While the interior of the building has been somewhat modernized, the entire structure is reminiscent of simpler times when the grandparents of the present day students attended school here. Though the exterior of the building looks like it houses a large interior, there are actually very few classrooms inside the main structure. There are only four classrooms on the first floor and six classrooms on the second floor, in addition to the library, the computer lab, the teacher's lounge, and the administrative offices. The building has central air conditioning though it remains cool from the thick outer stones and the massive oak trees that provide shade on all sides. A gymnasium was added some years ago, though, it, too, is an old structure, cooled by huge circulating fans. Three temporary buildings are placed in the back of the main structure, not visible from the street.

Though Blackbird received an LDE performance label of Academically Above Average because of the SPS of 76.4, with a predicted score of 91.67 and an SEI of -.71 SD, Blackbird was designated the less effective school in Pair 2. The SY 1999-2000 SPS improved to 85.9, but was still below the previous year's predicted score. With a total student population of 543, Blackbird has 56 students (10%) designated as special education and 487 students (90%) as regular education. Of this population, 16.7% are minority students and 36.7% come from a low SES background. Class sizes are fairly evenly divided with 27% in classes of 1-20 students, 33% in classes of 21-26 students, and 39% with classes over 27 students. An attendance rate of 95.2% at Blackbird is higher than the state average of 94.6%. However, the dropout rate (4.8%) is double the dropout average of the state (2.3%). Statewide, schools employ faculties whose qualifications include 37% with master's degrees. Almost half of Blackbird's faculty (47%) has obtained a master's degree.

On the initial visit to Blackbird, as previously agreed, I arrived in the office at 8:30 a.m., twenty minutes before the start of school. It was 9:50 before I was able to see the principal. In the interim, I observed the aftermath of three physical fights between a number of students, an altercation between a student and a bus driver, and a frenzy when it was discovered that a classroom did not have a teacher present.

The office area remained filled with students because at Blackbird Middle School, students had the right to fill out an "Incident Report." Therefore, any students who witnessed the fights or who were friendly with those involved in the fight and might have some background information were allowed to leave class and come to the office to fill out their version of the "incident." At one point, there were so many students in the office that chairs were pulled in, students sat on the floor, and overflowed in to the hallway.

Once the principal, Mrs. Daigle, dealt with the problems and cleared the office, she agreed to see me. When I entered her office, she stood at the doorway but did not invite me to sit. She informed me that this was a busy time of year and I had five minutes to explain what I wanted. I referred her to the fax sent the previous week, outlining the study. The fax was on her desk, along with a printed copy of a follow up email and phone message from me. After asking me how other principals in Northside Parish handled my study, she agreed to let me continue if I would be willing to write personal letters to each new teacher explaining the study and setting up appointments for interviews and observations directly with them. Mrs. Daigle offered to give me the teacher's class schedules and pointed me to the teacher's mailboxes. Other than that, she said she had too much to handle just then to be of any more help. She once again expounded on my poor timing, and then began to cry, explaining how overwhelmed she was. With promises to be unobtrusive, I was given permission by Mrs. Daigle to conduct the study.

Beginning Teachers at Mir Middle School

Three of the four beginning teachers at Blackbird agreed to be interviewed. One teacher agreed to complete the survey instruments but was not willing to be interviewed or observed. Table 8 outlines the beginning teachers at Blackbird, along with pertinent information regarding their teaching experience.

Assistance

All three teachers who agreed to be interviewed reported they attended an induction held by the Northside Parish School System. This one-day meeting primarily addressed LaTAAP information. Blackbird's induction was a one day meeting the day before the regular beginning of the year inservice, covering rules and policies of the school. Miss Dillard, a beginning science teacher, noted that her "real" induction came from the "open door policy" of the administration who are "there to help you."

Table 8. Teachers at Blackbird Who Volunteered for Interview.

TEACHER	SUBJECT	POSITION SELECTION	UNIVERSITY	DEGREE	EXPERIENCE	CERTIFIED
Diana Deshotel	Special Ed.	Job was available	University of Louisiana	B. S.	1 year	Yes
Danielle Dillard	Science	Job was available	University of Louisiana	B. A.	1.5 years	Yes
Darcy Dixon	P. E.	Job was available	University of Louisiana	B.S.	2 years	Yes
Teacher		Position				
Debra Daigle		Principal				
Dorothy Danover		Mentor				

* Experience includes current

* Experience includes current year

Mentor Support. Dorothy Danover is a special education teacher at Blackbird who also serves as mentor. She views her role as mentor in limited parameters. In the area of professional support, Mrs. Danover goes no further than extending awareness of programs and available resources. Once information is disseminated, then the new teacher can pursue what she feels is necessary. Mrs. Danover offers social support to the new teacher by introducing them to other faculty. No help is given in the area of resources. Mrs. Danover's duties as Lead Teacher in Special Education and as Yearbook Advisor limit the time she is able to spend with the beginning teachers.

All three teachers who were interviewed agreed that the mentor program at Blackbird is an informal process, meeting only once or twice a semester, unless questions or problems arise. The main function of the mentor, according to the teachers, is to help with state mandated paperwork. Miss Dixon, a new teacher assigned to coach and teach P. E., also commented that Mrs. Danover helped her with school level paperwork such as cumulative folders.

While Mrs. Deshotel, a beginning special education teacher, mentioned relying on the mentor, Mrs. Danover, if she had classroom problems, neither Miss Dixon nor Miss Dillard mentioned the mentor as a source of support. They reported soliciting support from faculty or, in the case of Miss Dixon, "whoever was around." None of the new teachers stated that social support was received unsolicited. All three new teachers also noted that Mrs. Danover was no help in providing resources. Miss Dixon was aided by the other coaches at the school. Unable to rely on Mrs. Danover, a special education teacher, for resources, Miss Dillard researched the state science benchmarks, then searched out resources herself. After she attended the summer workshop on the new science program being piloted, Miss Dillard had telephone and on-line support from that program's operators (see section entitled *Instruction at Blackbird*). Mrs. Deshotel said, "I just have to do the best I can on my own."

All three beginning teachers reported minimal contact with the mentor, commenting that observations were limited to one formal and one informal visit each semester. Minimal feedback from the observations was received. Mrs. Danover admitted that the classroom observations were "more informal than for evaluation purposes" and that feedback was only given "if the new teachers come to me - my door is always open."

Monitoring

Mrs. Daigle, the principal, called the teacher selection process a "crap shoot." While she interviewed every teacher that the Northside Central Office sent to her, she said "you don't see the real person in an interview." In her experience, she found that interviewees "talk the talk but, once they get here, don't walk the walk." Education is "a balance of business and teaching and too many new teachers don't realize what they are getting in to," according to Mrs. Daigle. When asked if recommendations of supervising teachers play a part in selection, Mrs. Daigle replied "success in student teaching does not necessarily translate to good teaching." Never knowing if a teacher will make a successful transition to Blackbird, Mrs. Daigle reported that she is always recruiting.

All three beginning teachers reported that Mrs. Daigle visits their classroom, both informal "pop ins" and formal observations for the state. Normally, feedback is only given on the mandated forms for the formal observations. However, if something has gone wrong during the observation, immediate feedback is received.

Mrs. Daigle stated that she is required to do both formal and informal observations. Because it is required, she does it. Mrs. Daigle made no mention of any usefulness attached to the observations nor her role in the implementation of effective teaching at Blackbird. Her comments supported the view that observations were an obligation that she had to fulfill for the state. She did note, however, that she often felt "more like a counselor than a principal."

Team Building

Miss Dixon relied on the other coaches for support during her initial year at Blackbird. Both Miss Dillard and Mrs. Deshotel counted on the faculty as a whole for informal mentoring. Miss Dillard, in particular, had a close relationship to Mrs. Daigle, one that was initiated when they traveled to Alabama together for the workshop on the pilot program in science. Miss Dillard often turned to the principal for support.

Miss Dillard also credited the faculty as a whole for her current position. She related the story that at the beginning of the year, because of decreases in enrollment, she was informed she might be assigned to another school after the first three weeks of school. When the principal informed her of the possibility, Mrs. Daigle also gave her a list of the names and phone numbers of the parents of her students. Miss Dillard spent the next several days calling parents to tell them about the pilot science program and the loss to their children if she was transferred. Miss Dillard explained to the parents about the difficulties for children associated with changing teachers once the school year had started. She also was vocal in the teacher's lounge about the possibility that some of them, who were non-science teachers, would have to pick up her classes. The following week at the school board meeting where personnel transfers were decided, the number of parents and other faculty who attended the meeting in her support overwhelmed Miss Dillard. Miss Dillard saw this as an indication of support for her as a teacher and colleague.

While Miss Dillard received instructional help from the science program operators and Miss Dixon turned to the other coaches, Mrs. Deshotel found help with the school's librarian, particularly for resources in language arts.

Intent to Stay

Challenges of the New Teacher. Mrs. Daigle, along with Mrs. Danover and Miss Dillard, agreed that the overwhelming amount of paperwork was the greatest challenge for new teachers. Mrs. Danover added to that the state's demand for accountability from the teachers. Mrs. Daigle also felt that acclimating to the guidelines of the state, the parish, and the school was difficult for most new teachers. According to the principal, the pressure from all sides was suffocating for the new teachers and for herself, somewhat like wearing a pressure suit as they worked.

Once again, viewing the first year experience differently from Miss Dillard, Mrs. Deshotel and Miss Dixon felt that mere survival was the greatest challenge. Miss Dixon commented that she felt grossly unprepared for the reality of teaching. Therefore, even if a situation was not normally stressful, it caused stress for her since she felt ill equipped for anything beyond the boundaries of her student teaching experience.

Mrs. Deshotel indicated that her struggles to survive the first year caused her frustration, anger, and, at times, a re-evaluation of her career choice. She said,

You spend four years of your life to come out and be treated horribly -by the students, by the parents and to get paid peanuts for it...When you're in college, you have all of these great views of how you are going to affect these children and make them say, you're the greatest teacher I ever had. You come out and you realize that some of them could care less about what you are teaching...And then you go home and look at that paycheck and think, what am I doing all of this for?

Mrs. Deshotel's frustration was fueled by disillusionment of what she believed teaching would be and the reality of the classroom. She commented that the lack of support for misbehaving children extended beyond the school to a general apathy and lack of support from the parents as well. While money was not the motivating factor for her, she stated that if salaries were increased, she might be able to accept the realities of what she daily faces.

Beginning Successes. Miss Dillard named the science pilot program as her greatest success. Mrs. Deshotel noted that after working diligently with two students she had helped them move from a resource setting to a regular education setting. Miss Dixon claimed that the key to success was discipline but could not articulate any successes that she, personally, had experienced during the past year.

From an administrator's standpoint, Mrs. Daigle believed that the key to success for a new teacher came from the nurturing environment of the whole school community. This belief might explain the climate of Blackbird. The beginning teachers at Blackbird seemed comfortable with each other and with the administrators. However, there was no evidence of academic press nor was any conversation regarding instructional strategies overheard, other than Miss Dillard's discussion of the science program.

The View of the Profession. All three teachers who were interviewed stated that they enjoyed teaching and viewed themselves as professionals. However, they all stated different rationales for this view. Mrs. Deshotel be-

lieved she is a professional by virtue of her college degree. Miss Dixon commented that she is a professional because she is "teaching kids stuff they wouldn't learn at their house." Miss Dillard indicated that the control and autonomy that she possesses in the workplace makes her a professional.

Holding Power. All three teachers, despite their concerns about paperwork and unsupportive parents, believed they would still be teaching in five years. All three felt that the desire to teach was intrinsic. As Miss Dixon said, "If you have it in your heart, you'll stay."

School Processes

A Climate for Learning. Throughout the semester, as the data collection at Blackbird progressed, it was difficult to shake the uncertainty about who was actually in charge of the school. cursory observations through classroom doors indicated that instruction was taking place. However, students often walked freely in the hallways and, at times, groups of students were observed loitering in the doorways while the teacher was inside the classroom. Students who entered the administrative area did not carry hall passes or permission slips and often made demands to use the phone or to see the counselor.

The community members of Blackbird were not friendly. I was rarely greeted as I made my way through the school. At times, when I waited in the office area to meet with teachers, both faculty and clerical staff wore expressions of exasperation as they went about their routine. The receptionist who greeted guests frequently experienced problems with her computer and often left her desk to seek help from the technology teacher. At these times, another secretary replaced her, an older woman with a gruff exterior who never offered a smile.

The principal and assistant principal often rushed in and out of the office, reminding me of a previous observation of Mrs. Daigle's that schools were as much about business as they were about teaching. As parents and visitors entered and left the office, the principal was never observed engaging in friendly, informal conversation with any of them. Mrs. Daigle was always in a hurry to be off to address an emergency situation or meet with someone. The anxious feeling of an impending crisis or an inability to complete tasks pervaded the atmosphere.

Nonetheless, the school days appeared to run routinely. There was never a sense that the air of anxiety had been replaced by chaos. The conclusion was that this was a school precariously teetering the edges between the two.

Instruction at Blackbird Middle School. Anxious to see the science classes after the enthusiastic endorsement of Miss Dillard, a sixth and a seventh grade science class were observed. Since Mrs. Deshotel taught special education classes, which I had been asked not to observe, I, instead, observed Miss Dixon's seventh and eighth grade physical education classes.

The science program that is being piloted throughout Northside Parish is based at the University of Alabama. This integrated program introduces middle school students to a cross section of scientific fields, including, but not limited to, archaeology, paleontology, biology, environmental science and earth science. There are four thematic units to the course, covering clues, machines, cycles, and biodiversity. The teacher is provided with videotapes, worksheets, activities, and tests for each unit. The packet includes an overall outline of the year, as well as the weeks during which each unit should be covered.

Each lesson begins with a telecast, a "readiness" video that explains what students will learn. Students are given a worksheet to complete as they watch the video. Web sites are provided. However, the only computer in the room was behind the teacher's desk. Therefore, it was difficult to ascertain if the students utilized this portion of the teaching plan.

There are no textbooks but students are given a three ring binder of readings which they keep at home. After the introductory telecast, the students take a homework sheet to complete from their readings at home. Activities are a part of each unit. Assessment is done through standardized quizzes.

As with any pre-packaged instructional program, the success or failure stems from the presentation of materials. With materials included, teachers can prepare the instruction or can merely distribute worksheets and let the children self-teach. Perhaps unaware that she had done so, Miss Dillard chose the latter. As Miss Dillard pointed out, "It gives me time. I don't have to worry about planning or getting information...All I do is make copies."

During two class visits, Miss Dillard had minimal interaction with the students. The seventh grade class began with a quiz which completed the previous unit of study. Miss Dillard orally reviewed with the class, using the quiz to call out questions. After a student gave the answer, Miss Dillard repeated it for emphasis. During the review a student walked in tardy with no explanation and Miss Dillard asked for none. Students were observed drinking soft drinks and eating candy during the instruction.

During the quiz, Miss Dillard stapled worksheets she had previously duplicated. As she was preoccupied with this task, students were observed cheating on the quiz. As they turned in the quiz, they picked up a worksheet. However, many students were observed off task during this activity. A group of students looked at pictures. Another student left to go to the restroom. Other groups whispered.

At the completion of the quiz, a student turned on the television and VCR so that the class could view the first telecast of the new lesson. Some students were on task while others worked on homework for other classes. Two girls were observed drawing pictures on each other's hands. One student approached the teacher's desk, grabbed a pair of scissors, and began to cut up plastic bags. All the while, Miss Dillard sorted and stapled worksheets.

The second class observed, a sixth grade class, was working on the design and construction of a biome. Students were given a handout of the parameters of the project then were put in to groups and told to begin. At various times, students worked intermittently on the project, either at the computer behind the teacher's desk or watching a telecast of a biome. However, students were easily led off track by each other. During the course of the class, students were observed whistling, talking, and arguing. One student informed Miss Dillard that he did not want to do this project. She replied, "Fine. Go get your math book." Another student made repeated requests to change his group, each request refused by Miss Dillard.

At one point, there was an altercation between two students, one yelling, the other accusing the first of hitting him. Miss Dillard asked the students to step outside. They did so, after stomping across the room and slamming the door. Miss Dillard spoke to the students, left them in the hall, then returned to survey their group's opinion of what happened during the altercation.

Both teachers observed at Blackbird (two P. E. classes were also observed, in addition to Miss Dillard's classes) appeared to have a good relationship with their students. However, neither teacher was observed pressing the students to participate. Whether this attitude was one of low expectations or of a resignation to apathy, the end result was merely "going through the motions." The teachers seemed intent on doing what they were minimally required to do so that they could move on to the next task that must be completed. The students, perhaps sensing this, exhibited a clear lack of enthusiasm for the lesson of the day.

Metaphorical Synopsis

Blackbird, in this case, is more than the name of the school. This metaphor describes both the physical and emotional spirit of the school. The structure of the school itself is towering, as are the mighty oak trees that surround the school. This huge looking edifice, however, encompasses a relatively small interior, far smaller than might be thought at first glance. The school, like the Blackbird spy plane, is not what it seems to be at first glance.

As with the physical structure, the climate of the school does not resemble the expectations, given the context of the school. The student population at Blackbird has a low rate of poverty (36.7%), and a small percentage of special education students (10%), with a faculty, almost half who have advanced degrees. Nonetheless, the administration and the new teachers struggle through the year. In every conversation with members of the school community, I heard the words "overwhelming," "survival," and "keeping our heads above water." The principal appeared to be valiantly "holding up and holding on" more so than the beginning teachers. The principal advocated social support in a nurturing atmosphere, which might also explain why any events out of the ordinary caused members of the school community to become emotionally overpowered.

The mentor at Blackbird, Mrs. Danover, played a minimal support role for the new teachers. The teachers interviewed reported scant contact with the mentor and, therefore, had to find professional, social, and resource support on their own. Given the pressure of the tasks facing the principal and the mentor, the novices had to take on the responsibility of their own induction. Much like the imposing size of the Blackbird, the principal and teachers at Blackbird believed their daily work was imposing, faced in a pressurized atmosphere of speed, leading to burnout.

Though Blackbird had the highest SEI of the ineffective schools in this study, the administration and faculty demonstrated the greatest propensity for external locus of control. The tasks of paperwork, discipline, coping with unsupportive parents all seemed to be too large, too fast, and too much for the members of this school community. Moreover, from the office of Mrs. Daigle to the ever optimistic Miss Dillard, they all expressed a helplessness to deal with the overwhelming nature of it all. The pilots of the Blackbird aircraft wore pressure suits to prevent blackouts and to help insure their survival. Observations of the members of the Blackbird Middle School community made it easy to imagine that they were all wearing pressure suits as they raced through the school day. The teachers, led by a principal, lost in the day-to-day reconnaissance which burned too much energy, were unable to focus on the instruction required to increase student's knowledge. The walls of this historic school enclosed a school culture far less healthy than at first glance. Overpowered and overwhelmed, the goals of student achievement became secondary to the goal of survival.

A Comparison of Polar Flight and Blackbird Middle Schools

Leadership is the key difference in the two middle schools located in Northside Parish. The strong and disciplined leadership of Mr. Clinton, the principal at Polar Flight, is far different from the overwhelmed Mrs. Daigle at

Blackbird. Taking an active role in the school community, Mr. Clinton, as well as the assistant principals, were visible in the hallways and in the classrooms. Mrs. Daigle, on the other hand, rarely was seen outside of her office and when she was, this principal was either rushing off to a meeting or on her way to solve a crisis.

Polar Flight's positive reputation in the community allowed for choice in teacher selection. Potential applicants left resumes with Mr. Clinton, which allowed him to peruse candidates before the central office, sent them to him for interviews. Moreover, the principal actively recruited teachers which he felt might positively impact students, as in the case of Mrs. Cassidy and Mrs. Coussan.

Mrs. Daigle approached teacher selection as a "crap shoot" rather than a process over which she had control. She viewed applicants with suspicion, not certain the potential teacher was being candid during the interview. As such, she stated that she was always recruiting since few new teachers "worked out."

Organizational routine was another area where the two leaders differed. Polar Flight was an efficient organization which ran like clockwork. This was evident in the attitudes of the entire staff, from the front office secretaries to the children in the classrooms. Though Mr. Clinton rarely smiled and was businesslike in his demeanor, the school was an efficacious system.

Blackbird, while operating routinely, did not appear to operate efficiently. Observations of new teacher's instruction as well as cursory observations through classroom doorways, showed disorder and a lack of student engagement. As the time neared for the end of class bell, students were frequently seen loitering in the doorway, talking and waiting to exit.

The resulting school climate, however, rather than the style of leadership itself, led to the quality of the socialization experience for the new teachers at Polar Flight and at Blackbird. All four teachers at Polar Flight used the word "love" in expressing their feelings toward teaching. Three of the four teachers reported they would stay in teaching because of the school where their first experience took place. They cited teachers who inspire, the well run school, and the belief that Polar Flight is "all about kids" as reasons for their positive socialization experience.

Beginning teachers at Blackbird used the word "enjoy" when referring to their work. Emphasizing the difficulties with unsupportive parents and the enormous demands of paperwork, all three new teachers at Blackbird stated they will continue to teach. However, their reasoning was the belief that teaching was intrinsic to them.

The mentors at both Polar Flight and Blackbird were ineffective, as reported by the beginning teachers. The Polar Flight mentor was so involved in other activities, particularly as the union representative for the area, that little time was available for the new teachers. As the special education lead teacher and yearbook sponsor, the Blackbird mentor's time was limited. Faculty collegiality at both schools was adequate, according to the new teachers. Table 9 documents the differences in these general a priori elements in the Pair 2 schools (see section Comparison of Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools for explanation of table components).

Observation data found that beginning teachers at Polar Flight were more likely to demonstrate effective teaching than were teachers at Blackbird. Classroom management problems, low expectations, and a lack of academic press characterized instruction at Blackbird.

Specific a priori themes, as documented in Table 10, outlines particular challenges faced by the new teachers and the sources of success for the new teacher by frequency of mentions. Interdisciplinary teaming had not been implemented at Polar Flight or Blackbird. Therefore, this area was deleted by shading these cells in Table 10. Teacher intent to stay or leave is indicated by number.

Table 9. General A Priori Themes at Polar Flight and Blackbird Middle.

SCHOOL	MENTORING ASSISTANCE	ADMINISTRATIVE MONITORING	COLLEGIAL TEAM BUILDING	EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION
Polar Flight (ME)*	↓	↑	→	↑
Blackbird (LE)*	↓	↓	→	↓

* ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Legend: Effective: ↑

Ineffective: ↓

Holding Steady: →

Table 10. Specific A Priori Themes at Polar Flight and Blackbird Middle.

SCHOOL	GREATEST CHALLENGE		GREATEST SUCCESS		INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMING		INTENT TO STAY		
	Discipline	Other	Student Success	Other	Professional and collegial support	Structural concept	Intend to Stay	Intend to Leave	Intend to Stay but not at present school
Polar Flight (ME)*	2	2	1	3			4	0	0
Blackbird (LE)*	1	2	1	1			3	0	0

*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Teachers at Polar Flight were divided over whether discipline or paperwork presented the greatest challenge. Teachers at both schools reported paperwork as a challenge but teachers at Blackbird also reported survival as a challenge.

Success for the new teachers came in many forms and appeared unrelated to the level of effectiveness of the school. Teachers at Polar Flight reported surviving the assessment while the pilot science program was considered a success at Blackbird. One teacher at each school reported the children's success as their own. One teacher at Blackbird said she did not have any successes to report.

There was little difference found in the specific a priori themes in the Pair 2 schools. Moreover, overall support from the mentor was found lacking in both schools and thus, new teachers turned to colleagues for needed social support. The difference in effectiveness for these two schools clearly lay in the leadership. The goals, vision, and overall instructional leadership skills of the principal steered their novice crews on a flight path to a more effective or a less effective middle school.

Multiple Schools Qualitative Analysis

Analysis of all schools in the sample took place in two cycles. Interviews of principals, mentors, and beginning teachers were first unitized and categorized (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) with a priori themes by school context. General a priori themes included: mentoring assistance, administrative monitoring, collegial team building, and effective instruction. More specific a priori themes included: challenges facing the new teacher, successes of the new teacher (or key to success from interviews with administrators and mentors), teacher intent to stay, and, in those schools which implement teaming, the perception of interdisciplinary teaming.

Through the process of analysis, additional themes emerged that were manifested across cases and contexts. These themes provide insight in to the overall socialization experiences of beginning teachers. The emerging themes deal with the role played by various aspects of the socialization experience. These include: the role of the principal, the role of the assigned mentor, and the role of the university preparation program.

General A Priori Themes

General a priori themes for all schools in the sample are documented in Table 11. A discussion of these themes as observed in all samples follows.

Mentoring Assistance. Schools across contexts in Louisiana are required to assign official state trained mentors to beginning teachers. While all schools in the sample adhered to this requirement, the level of mentoring assistance and the vigor with which mentoring was provided differed greatly by school context.

Official mentors in less effective schools were more likely to view their role as one limited to state mandated paperwork and observations. Of those mentors in less effective schools who ventured beyond the minimum duties of the program, that role was a passive one, restricting themselves to introducing the new teachers to the rest of the

faculty or to disseminating information to the novices about workshops or programs which the beginner had the option to investigate, if interested.

The two less effective schools in Southside Parish had the least effective schoolwide mentoring programs. Only one of the eight new teachers at Tupelov was assigned an official mentor and he stated that he would approach the principal for questions or concerns before he would go to his mentor. Only one of five new teachers at Tailspin was assigned an official mentor. Seven months after school began, this new teacher reported that her only contact with the mentor was an introduction. The four new teachers at Tailspin who were not assigned a mentor also were not familiar with the state's teacher assessment program.

Four of the five more effective schools had a proactive, vigorous mentoring program at their schools. Polar Flight was the exception to this. The other four schools, however, had programs designed to address the whole person of the new teacher. Mentors at the more effective schools were more likely to offer moral support, counseling, and serve as a "sounding board" to the new teachers. More frequent meetings with mentees, particularly in the first few months of school, were more common at more effective schools than at less effective schools. Mentors at more effective schools were also more likely to address issues beyond the scope of the state assessment, such as conduct during a parent/teacher conference, how to set up a roll book, and classroom management.

Table 11. General A Prior Themes for Multiple Schools.

PR	SCHOOL	STATUS *	MENTORING ASSISTANCE	ADMINISTRATIVE MONITORING	COLLEGIAL TEAM BUILDING	EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION
1	Barnstorming	ME	↑	↑	↑	↑
	Mir	LE	→	↓	→	↓
2	Polar Flight	ME	→	↑	→	↑
	Blackbird	LE	↓	↓	→	↓
3	Cargo	ME	↑	↑	↑	↑
	Kamikaze	LE	→	↓	↑	↓
4	Concorde	ME	↑	→	↑	↑
	Tupelov	LE	↓	↓	↓	↓
5	Stealth	ME	↑	→	↑	↑
	Tailspin	LE	↓	↓	↓	↓

*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Legend: Effective:



Ineffective:



Holding Steady: →

Monitoring. Like official mentors, administrators, most often the principal, are also required to monitor instruction of the beginning teachers. All schools reported fulfilling this expectation. However, like the mentoring aspect, the quality of the monitoring varied by school context.

Principals in less effective schools were more likely to carry out the minimum number of required observations for the district and state. Observations at the less effective schools were more likely to fulfill state requirements rather than to facilitate instructional effectiveness. Two other aspects of monitoring, quality of feedback and attitude toward the state assessment program, were manifested in the study.

Three of the five principals in less effective schools only gave positive feedback, as reported by the new teachers. Encouraging words, rather than a critique followed observations. Some feedback from observations came in the form of pep talks. One principal did not provide feedback at all. His view was that if something needed to be addressed he would do so immediately. He monitored by "no news is good news."

Monitoring from more effective schools included frequent visits to teacher's classrooms, both formal and informal. Principals in more effective schools were more likely to advocate "walk through" visits, also called "pop ins" or "popcorns." These visits lasted from one minute to ten minutes, with a cursory but thorough look at lesson

plans and student engagement. Feedback was immediate and, likely, in writing. New teachers, often intimidated initially, grew comfortable with these visits. Beginners at more effective schools reported inviting the principal to visit their classes and students anticipated "showing off" for the principal. Feedback from one administrator took the form of reflection, a method the new teachers appreciated as one which motivated them to objectively view their instruction.

Principals at more effective schools were also more likely to be viewed as open to new ideas and new instructional techniques. One principal utilized school wide faculty email to both solicit and share ideas from teachers. Another principal operated through shared decision making, a policy which empowered the new teachers to view themselves as professionals as well as instilling them with confidence in their abilities.

Team Building. New teachers across school contexts reported some type of collegial team building. However, the form of the team building varied.

New teachers at less effective schools which incorporated teaming (Mir and Tupelov) depended on team members for support, while new teachers at Tailspin relied on themselves, feeling free to ask other faculty for help but receiving nothing from them voluntarily. Team building at Kamikaze was more social (Ladies Night Suppers); however, the social support was limited to those who "fit in." New teachers reported that those who did not take the advice of veterans were ostracized and some veterans viewed the novices as incompetent. Blackbird was the exception for the less effective schools. New teachers perceived a strong level of team building there, believing that the faculty, as a whole, takes care of the novices.

More effective schools were more likely to have supportive and friendly faculties. One new teacher at Concorde reported that the faculty was the reason she chose to stay at Concorde. Informal mentors were numerous and readily provided resources as well as social support.

Effective Instruction. Teachers in more effective schools were more likely to demonstrate the components of effective teaching in their instruction than were teachers in less effective schools. Teachers in more effective schools were more likely to incorporate elements of higher order thinking skills and to encourage student participation. Transitions were more expeditious and higher expectations were established for those teachers in more effective schools.

Teachers in less effective schools, overall, demonstrated the ability to effectively communicate with their students but were less likely to involve the students in class participation. Teachers in less effective schools were more likely to hold low expectations for their students and rely on knowledge and comprehension questions. Teachers in both more effective and less effective schools faced challenges in monitoring techniques.

Specific A Priori Themes

Table 12 illustrates the differences in the specific a priori themes found from all schools in the study. This table outlines frequency of mentions by teacher for the challenges and successes at all schools in the study. Teacher intent to stay is indicated by number of teachers. Not all teachers responded to all items. Interdisciplinary teaming and level of support are indicated by the general view of all new teachers at each school who were interviewed for this study. Those schools which do not implement interdisciplinary teaming are shaded.

Intent to Stay. Collegial social support was a variable predicting a new teacher's intent to stay in education. This, along with overall school processes as perceived by the new teacher, led to the novice expressing an intention to continue in the field of education. New teachers at more effective schools were more likely to express an intention to remain in teaching (93.7%) than were teachers at less effective schools (62.9%). Reasons reported for an intention to leave included money, a lack of professionalism, and a view that teaching was temporary until a better opportunity presented itself.

Support for the New Teacher. Overall support which includes colleagues, mentor, administration, parents, and the community at large was rare in the ten schools under study. Only three schools in the study could claim overall support.

New teachers at six of the ten schools perceived there was some form of support. Teachers at Kamikaze, and Tupelov perceived that support from their colleagues. Teachers at Mir, Polar Flight, and Blackbird received support from both their colleagues and their principal. Along with colleagues and the principal, teachers at Steath also turned to their mentor. However, they perceived very little support from the parents and the community at large. Beginning teachers at Tailspin did not perceive any measure of support from any of these areas.

Challenges of the Beginning Teacher. School context was not related to perceptions of the beginning teachers regarding first year challenges. Across contexts, classroom management was more often reported as the greatest challenge facing new teachers. Thirteen of twenty seven (48%) of beginning teachers in less effective schools named discipline as a challenge as did seven of sixteen (44%) of teachers in more effective schools. Moreover, three administrators in less effective schools and one administrator in a more effective school also stated classroom

management as a challenge for new teachers. Other challenges mentioned more than once were paperwork, survival, and establishing a rapport with students.

Table 12. Specific A Priori Themes for Multiple Schools.

PAIR	SCHOOL	STATUS *	SUPPORT			GREATEST CHALLENGE		GREATEST SUCCESS		INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS		INTENT TO STAY				
			Overall support	Some support	No support	Discipline	Other	Student Success	Other	Profess/collegial	Structural concept	Intend to Stay	Intend to Leave	Intend to Stay but not at present school		
1	Barnstorming	ME	X			2	2	3	1	X		4	0	0		
	Mir	LE		X		3	1	3	1		X	2	2	0		
2	Polar Flight	ME		X		2	2	1	3			4	0	0		
	Blackbird	LE		X		2	2	1	1			3	0	0		
3	Cargo	ME	X			1	1	1	1			2	0	0		
	Kamikaze	LE		X		3	4	0	4		X	3	2	2		
4	Concorde	ME	X			1	1	1	1	X		2	0	0		
	Tupelov	LE		X		6	2	2	6		X	5	3	0		
5	Stealth	ME		X		1	3	0	4			3	1	0		
	Tailspin	LE			X	2	3	0	5			3	2	1		
All Schools																
All Schools: ME					3	2	0	7	9	6	10	2	0	15	1	0
All Schools: LE					0	4	1	16	12	6	17	0	3	15	8	4

*ME= More Effective; LE= Less Effective

Success. First year successes were also reported across contexts. Viewing success in their students was listed most often as a yardstick for the new teacher's personal success (seven teachers in less effective schools, or 27%, and five teachers in more effective schools, or 31%). Also reported as an indication of success was establishing a rapport with students. Rapport was mentioned more often in less effective urban fringe schools while student success was mentioned more often in more effective urban fringe schools.

Interdisciplinary Teaming. Five of the ten schools implemented the middle school concept of interdisciplinary teaming. Of the five schools, three were less effective (Kamikaze, Tupelov, and Mir) and two were more effective (Barnstorming and Concorde). The contrasts between the two lay in the perception of teaming as a structural concept (less effective) or as a means to professional development and effective instruction (more effective).

The less effective schools viewed teaming as a block schedule format. As part of this organizational schedule, teachers were grouped with other core teachers, all with the same group of students. Kamikaze eliminated school bells and allowed the teams to decide when to change classes. While the school had a general guideline for class times, the teachers had the option to hold the students longer or release them from class earlier, determined by teacher need. This convenience in the lengthening or shortening of class periods to allow students to finish tests or

projects was an added benefit of the schedule, according to the teachers. Teachers at Mir and Kamikaze credited the team with their induction and relied on the teams for social support. Drawbacks to teaming were found at Tupelov where new teachers complained of poor treatment by other team members and the long class periods associated with teaming.

Teachers at more effective schools held a different perception of teaming. Though scheduling was a part of the teaming effort, the main benefit, according to the teachers at Barnstorming, was an opportunity for professional development and research. Learning teams gave the new teachers insights into instructional strategies and the ability to gather data from these strategies. Teachers at Concorde credited the teams with help in classroom management, implementing higher order thinking skills into their lesson plans, and social support.

Emerging Themes

The general themes of assistance, monitoring, and team building, along with the specific themes of intent to stay, challenges, successes, and interdisciplinary teaming produced results which delineated differences between more effective and less effective schools. However, data analysis produced additional themes, not initially sought. Themes which emerged as a result of data analysis focus on the various roles played by parts of the school organization as they impact the socialization experiences of beginning teachers. These include: the role of the principal, the role of the mentor, and the role of the university preparation program.

The Role of the Principal. Analysis of the role of the principal in the socialization experience resulted in a clear delineation between more effective and less effective schools. Those principals in the more effective schools are *focused*. Those in the less effective schools are either *frenzied*, *fractured*, or *floaters*.

Across school contexts, principals in more effective schools rarely sit behind their desks. These principals move down the hallways, into classrooms, and out on to the playground. Their focus is on every aspect of the school, ensuring that every member of the school community is also focused on the mission of increasing student achievement in an orderly atmosphere. During transition time between classes, these administrators are in the hallways monitoring and greeting, while, at the same time, ensuring that students are moving rapidly to their next learning experience.

Principals in effective schools are focused on bringing together a committed faculty through recruiting or through interview techniques geared to this selection. Input from other faculty ensures that a common vision for potential faculty exists. Once employed, principals in more effective schools go beyond the minimal instructional monitoring required by the state. Their monitoring is frequent, often unannounced, and invariably followed by thought-provoking feedback for the novice.

Beginning teachers in effective schools clearly understand the emphasis placed on effective instruction by their principals. New and creative instructional strategies are encouraged, as long as the end result is focused on an increase in student achievement. Beginning teachers understand that they are a valued part of the school community because their input and ideas are accepted and often shared with other faculty. Support from these principals includes, but often extends beyond, social support. Teachers in effective schools are supported in their decisions regarding classroom management and challenges from the public.

The focus on excellence in the classroom permeates throughout the schools and in to the surrounding community. Beginning teachers in these schools enlarge their efforts as they, too, focus on the vision of the principal for their students. As the novice teachers are socialized into a school culture of excellence in education, they, like their principal, are "all about the kids," with a focus on achievement.

Principals in less effective schools fell in to three categories: the *floater*, the *frenzied*, and the *fractured*. As they fell, so did their beginning teachers.

The *floater* in this study was a friendly administrator, easy going and well liked. The *floater* "goes with the flow" and, according to the novices, is a "laid back" manager. Freely admitting that he has no say in the hiring of teachers, he accepts the faculty that the school district sends to him without question. The school somewhat operates itself, with no bells and a very powerful mentor, one who, according to one new teacher, handles the incorrigible students that the principal cannot handle. The other *floater* principal drifted in to school in the morning with no explanation, greeting everyone and in no hurry to begin the work day.

The majority of the faculty appear to personally like the *floater* but few view him/her as a leader. Facets of the socialization experience which are normally viewed as important are overlooked by this principal, such as forgetting to assign a mentor to a new teacher or limiting classroom visits to once a semester, often with no follow up feedback. Frequently seen at the after school "Miller Time" in the commons area of the school, one of these principals is observed telling stories and laughing at the end of the school day, rather than monitoring students in the bus area. Another *floater* had a matronly air and the beginners turned to her, rather than the mentor, for social support. Novices felt comfortable working for her.

For those beginning teachers who desire an instructional leader, the *float*er is a source of frustration. Searching out instruction and management advice from colleagues, some novices diligently work while observing that other novices teach only for the state assessment, spending the remainder of their class periods "behind their desk counting out money for their fundraiser." These beginners believe their principal "lets things slip by" and therefore, conversations and behavior unbecoming to a professional educator become the norm. For some of the new teachers, their frustration quickly grows into resentment. Other new teachers become a part of the culture of drifting and begin to float through the year as well.

The *frenzied* principal has a diametrically opposed work style. In a constant state of upheaval, she is always behind, always in crisis, always on edge. The rigid posture and clenched jaw are physical manifestations of the pressurized atmosphere in which this principal perceives she works.

Managing with an external locus of control, the *frenzied* principal calls teacher selection a "crap shoot" and is never certain whether a teacher will continue in employment, once hired. Suspicious of the applicants, she accepts that the truth will be stretched during the selection interview. Induction of novices is delegated to the mentor, a teacher overwhelmed by yearbook advising and special education lead teacher duties.

Beginning teachers either like or fear the *frenzied* administrator but the atmosphere of pressure and suffocating duties transfer to the new teacher. The novices who work in this atmosphere become acculturated to living in a pressure suit and, likewise, are thrown in to frenzies by paperwork and events out of the norm. Under the guidance of the *frenzied* principal, the school community becomes one which is acted upon, rather than acting.

A third type of principal which emerged from this study was the *fractured* administrator. Both of the fractured principals were employed by the same school district, a district, which has experienced several breaks in the recent past, including, but not limited to, white flight, superintendent turnover, teacher dissatisfaction, and dismal local funding. These problems in a fractured district may have filtered down to the office of the principals, who also appeared broken by problems in their schools.

The schools which were led by *fractured* principals were characterized by little discipline; therefore, time which the principals spent disciplining students was time taken away from monitoring and supporting beginning teachers. Classrooms in these schools had little or no instruction taking place and in those classes where teachers were attempting instruction, students were often observed disengaged or off task.

Schools managed by the *fractured* principals had the largest numbers of new teachers in the study. These new teachers reported little support from administrators or from colleagues. Communication was poor between the teachers and the administrators with teachers often discovering that they were uninformed about deadlines or upcoming events. Moreover, the viewpoint of the teachers and the *fractured* administrator were inconsistent; thus, little data triangulation was found in these schools. Many of these new teachers were teaching out of their area of expertise and more uncertified teachers were found at these schools than at any other.

Role of the Mentor. All schools across contexts had at least one faculty member trained by the state's Department of Education and assigned as the official mentor. Beginning teachers in all schools also turned to other faculty for professional and social support who were willing to serve as unofficial mentors. While informal mentors played a role in the socialization of new teachers across school contexts, this discussion centers on the officially trained and assigned mentors.

The Louisiana Assistance and Assessment Program Mentor Training Manual (LaTAAP, 1997) outlines three basic roles of the mentor, along with the responsibilities of each of these roles. A generalized summary of the roles is as follows:

- Coach
 - analyzes new teacher's instructional process and performance
 - expands and applies repertoire of instruction and management
 - conducts advisory interviews and observations with feedback for the assessment program
- Model
 - models effective instruction
 - guides management of professional responsibilities
 - provides encouragement and support
- Professional Development Specialist
 - helps new teacher analyze and resolve problems
 - directs new teacher to resources
 - helps formulate Professional Development Plan for new teacher
 - assists new teacher in analyzing student performance data and student records to plan instruction

Analysis of data regarding beginning teacher's perceptions of their mentoring experiences revealed that, while the job description was identical across contexts, the mentors themselves held differing attitudes toward what they believed was required of them and what they perceived the novices needed from them. While the source of the attitude or perception differed by school, generally the official mentors fell into three categories. Four of the five more effective schools had mentors who offered *maximum* support to the novices (Barnstorming, Cargo, Concorde, and Stealth). Three of the five less effective schools and one more effective school had mentors who offered *minimum* support to the novices (Mir, Blackbird, Kamikaze, and Polar Flight). The two less effective schools in Southside Parish (Tupelov and Tailspin) had mentors who were missing in action (*MLA*) for the beginning teachers. There were commonalities in each group.

With the exception of Polar Flight, mentors in the more effective schools generally addressed all areas (coach, model, professional development specialist), viewing their role as one of *maximum* support. Mentors at the more effective schools saw their responsibilities beyond preparing the new teacher for the assessment at the conclusion of their second semester. They viewed their duties as addressing the whole person of the beginner. This overall approach to mentoring was a "hands on" approach which targeted instruction, classroom management, resources, and general encouragement. These mentors did not wait for the novice to approach them but sought out the new teacher and offered help and resources.

Contact with the new teacher was frequent and interactive. The mentors targeted upcoming events such as report cards or parent teacher conferences, helping to prepare the beginner through dissemination of information or through role-playing. This was a proactive approach to induction; that is, rather than solving problems after they occur, the mentor addressed upcoming responsibilities of the new teacher and attempted to educate the novice to situations prior to the development of problems.

Mentors in more effective schools were more likely to take on the role of social support. One of the responsibilities listed under the role of "Model" was that of encouragement and support. The LaTAAP Mentor Training Manual states, "the mentor must be a confidant and friend as well as a resource and developer" (p.3). This role was not observed as a common one at the less effective schools. The task of nurturing the new teacher was more often undertaken by those mentors in effective schools. One teacher reported that two years after her assessment, she still turned to the school's mentor for counseling and advice.

Mentors at more effective schools took on all three roles of mentoring, the coach, the model and the professional development specialist. In doing so, the beginning teacher received moral support, resources, assistance in the formulation of a Professional Development Plan, as well as coaching in preparation for the final assessment. This approach is a *maximized* approach to mentoring and was found in more effective schools, regardless of whether interdisciplinary teaming was implemented at the school.

Mentors at less effective schools were more likely to limit their role to that of "coach"; that is, these mentors were more likely to singularly address the role of assessment preparation. The LaTAAP Mentor Training Manual warns against taking this narrow approach by stating that

The mentor is not responsible for the new teacher's performance in the assessment process. The mentor can and should help the new teacher prepare for that process, but the mentor's responsibility is to help him/her become a competent, confident teacher (p.6).

Beginning teachers at the less effective schools whose mentors took this *minimum* approach to their role were forced to seek informal mentors. The informal mentors were sometimes found on grade level teams (Kamikaze, Mir) or, in the case of those schools which did not incorporate teaming (Polar Flight and Blackbird) to department coordinators or veteran teachers who were in close proximity. The veteran teachers who were tagged as the informal mentors were perceived by the new teachers as willing to answer questions, provide information, or point out resources. However, new teachers also reported that information was rarely volunteered; it had to be sought out by the beginner.

Beginning teachers reported that the "hands off" approach resulted in minimal contact with the mentor, often only for LaTAAP observations or to complete the paperwork required for the assessment. New teachers who found themselves with a *minimum* mentor, overall, did not perceive the situation in negative terms, but instead credited conflicting schedules, differing certifications between mentor and mentee, or the additional duties assigned to the mentor which made interaction with the new teacher difficult. Moreover, the importance of successfully completing the assessment loomed large for the new teachers; thus, limiting the mentor's role to assessment preparation was not viewed in a negative light by the novices.

A third category of mentors are those which are "missing in action" (*MLA*). Two of the less effective schools, Tailspin and Tupelov, both located in Southside Parish, had official mentors but who, according to the statements of the new teachers, were not assigned to mentor them. Only one of the eight new teachers at Tupelov was assigned an official mentor and he stated that his comfort level with the mentor was minimal. He reported going to the principal

for needed support and information, rather than the mentor. Only one new teacher at Tailspin of the five novices had been assigned a mentor and was going through the assistance/assessment process. Other new teachers at Tailspin did not know who the school's mentor was, when asked.

Beginning teachers at Tupelov and Tailspin could not articulate what LaTAAP was but reported that they had been observed by the principal (Tupelov) and assistant principal (Tailspin). Mentors at both schools stated that assigned obligations prevented them from optimally fulfilling their duties as mentors. Information regarding the responsibility for the failure to assign a mentor to the new teachers was vague. Thus, beginners at two of the less effective schools completed their first year with mentors who were *MLA*.

Role of the University Preparation Program. Interviews with principals, mentors, and beginning teachers found dissatisfaction with teacher education preparation programs. Across school contexts there was agreement that universities do not prepare students for what will greet them in the "real world" of teaching. Only one school from the ten in the sample (Cargo) expressed satisfaction with the preparation program of the new teachers on staff.

Three problems with university preparation programs surfaced during data analysis, though all concerns are interrelated. One problem focused on the training the pre-service teachers receive in classroom management. Though one university offers a one-hour course in discipline methods, in general, students do not receive practical experience. Another university was faulted because the impetus of the curriculum and instruction courses was on creativity and fun in instruction. Beginning teachers reported that they quickly discovered that fun in instruction translated into chaos until a firm classroom management plan was in place. One new teacher noted that the content of the classroom management course was as much about bulletin boards as it was about discipline.

A second concern of those interviewed centered around student teaching. Related to the concerns about being unprepared to discipline students, fault was found with the experience of student teaching itself. Students are normally placed in schools with student populations much unlike the student populations to which first year teachers are assigned. If there is a discipline problem in the classroom during student teaching, the supervising teacher in the back of the room quickly addresses it. There was general agreement that the student teaching experience was too controlled. According to one principal, university professors "teach as if all students come from good homes with good values" and therefore, new teachers don't know how to deal with students who don't care. One mentor expressed concerns about the selection of supervising teachers. She noted that the same supervising teachers are chosen year after year and not all are effective teachers, particularly, "as they look at retirement."

A final concern, related to the previous discussion, is that universities do not prepare education majors for "the real world." One assistant principal stated that "universities teach techniques and theory and in schools you get behavior problems with social and emotional issues." Incorporating theory with classroom practices should be addressed at the pre-service level, not at a two day workshop given by the school district at the start of the initial year of teaching. In addition, several beginning teachers stated they were unprepared for the time that teaching involved, time beyond the classroom, which included grading papers, preparing for class, attending meetings and workshops, filling out district and state paperwork, and sponsoring activities assigned by the principal.

As can be seen from Table 13, the emerging themes outline some commonalities. More effective schools are more likely to have an effective principal and mentor, a team whose vision for the school incorporates successful socialization with student achievement. Less effective schools, on the other hand, are more likely to have an ineffective or missing mentor who, teamed with an "out of focus" principal, provide a less than smooth socialization experience for their new teachers.

School personnel who agreed to be interviewed expressed the hope that universities will address these concerns, stating that doing so might mean that challenges faced by new teachers might be solved before the initial year begins. Those principals and teachers familiar with the Holmes programs enthusiastically endorsed it, noting that teachers who graduated from that program were more self-confident and better prepared to deal with the real world of teaching.

Results from Multiple Schools

Analysis of qualitative data found patterns both by and across contexts. Organizational processes and roles of the members of the school community reveal a picture of a negative socialization experience and a positive one. Summary results of analysis can be found in Table 14. Contextual variables in the organizational processes of the schools are outlined by their presence in more effective, less effective, or, in some cases, in both more and less effective schools. Table 14 allows comparison across contexts of those findings from this study.

Table 13. Emerging Themes for Multiple Schools.

PAIR	SCHOOL	STATUS*	ROLE OF PRINCIPAL	ROLE OF MENTOR	ROLE OF PREP PROGRAM
1	Barnstorming	ME	Focus	Max	Dissatisfied
	Mir	LE	Floater	Min	Dissatisfied
2	Polar Flight	ME	Focus	Min	Dissatisfied
	Blackbird	LE	Frenzied	Min	Dissatisfied
3	Cargo	ME	Focus	Max	Satisfied
	Kamikaze	LE	Floater	Min	Dissatisfied
4	Concorde	ME	Focus	Max	Dissatisfied
	Tupelov	LE	Fractured	MIA	Dissatisfied
5	Stealth	ME	Focus	Max	Dissatisfied
	Tailspin	LE	Fractured	MIA	Dissatisfied

*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Table 14. Comparisons of Variables across Contexts.

VARIABLE	MORE EFFECTIVE	LESS EFFECTIVE	BOTH MORE AND LESS EFFECTIVE
Official mentors	Proactive and vigorous in their mentoring	Passive in their mentoring	
	Mentors the "whole person" of the new teacher, providing professional, resource, and social support	Views their role as one limited to LaTAAP paperwork and observations	
Principals	Frequently visits teacher's classrooms, both formally and informally	Carries out the minimum number of required observations for district and state compliance	
	Provides written feedback targeting both strengths and weaknesses, and often, in the form of reflection	Provides either no feedback or feedback which is limited to positive comments	

VARIABLE	MORE EFFECTIVE	LESS EFFECTIVE	BOTH MORE AND LESS EFFECTIVE
PRINCIPALS	Views role as an instructional leader, open to new ideas and new instructional techniques, with the goal of student achievement.	Either takes a passive role in school operations or is so burdened by school pressures that external locus of control is the deciding factor in decision making.	
	Focus is on the mission of increasing student achievement in an orderly atmosphere	Focus is on management or, in some cases, has no articulated mission	
	Selects new teachers who are committed to the vision of the principal and the mission of the school	Selects new teachers based on who is sent from the central office to fill a position	
Interdisciplinary teaming	If no teaming, depended on official mentors or informal mentors for social support	If no teaming, depended on themselves or informal mentors for social support	If incorporated teaming, depended on team members for social support
	If incorporated, viewed as a means to professional development and effective instruction	If incorporated, viewed as a structural or scheduling concept	
Intent to stay	More likely to express an intention to remain in teaching	Less likely to express an intention to remain in teaching	
Components of instruction	New teachers demonstrated components of effective teaching in their instruction, particularly higher order thinking skills, high expectations for students, and expeditious transition times	New teachers, in their instruction, held low expectations for their students, were less likely to involve students in class participation, and relied on recall or comprehension type questions	
Challenges			New teachers more often reported classroom management
Successes			New teachers more often reported student successes as their own
View of the Profession			New teachers viewed themselves as professionals

VARIABLE	MORE EFFECTIVE	LESS EFFECTIVE	BOTH MORE AND LESS EFFECTIVE
University Teacher Preparation Programs			Programs fail to adequately prepare new teachers to successfully manage classrooms
			Programs fail to prepare new teachers for the "real world" of teaching
			Student teaching is not a profitable experience

Discussion and Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study. The first conclusion is that four year pre-service university programs are not adequately preparing student teachers for the realities of today's classrooms. Inadequate classroom management preparation leaves the new teacher struggling to survive the "real world" of teaching and learning. The gap between theory and practice is not adequately bridged by university professors or student teaching programs with the result that a new teacher is well versed in theories of learning but unable to translate these theories into effective classroom practice. In those schools which provide professional, instructional, and social support, members of the school community state that if novices were adequately prepared, the time and resources of the school could be used for other aspects of teacher socialization.

An additional conclusion from the study is that interdisciplinary teaming, if implemented to increase professional and collegial development, can substantially aid new teachers during the socialization process. If interdisciplinary teaming is viewed as a structural concept, new teachers, nonetheless, can benefit from the collegial support which is provided through teams. However, professional support and development, unlikely, will result from such a view. An extension of this conclusion is that schools across contexts which implemented teaming received some benefit, regardless of how the concept was viewed.

A final conclusion drawn from the study is that effective teacher socialization is the result of the processes within the school, rather than the result of its individual components. In other words, the effective individual elements of assistance, monitoring, and team building are insufficient in providing effective socialization. Studies (NCES, 1997; Shen, 1998) point out that initial experiences in teaching and the conditions under which a new teacher works impact decision making on whether to commit to the profession. A positive socialization experience brought about from effective assistance, monitoring, and team building in an effective organization will likely increase a novice's desire to remain a teacher.

Recommendations

Data analysis from this study, along with the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, lead to the recommendations presented here. Recommendations are categorized by recommendations for research, recommendations for policy, and recommendations for practice.

Recommendations for Research

Future research should consider the following:

- Additional research at the middle school level is warranted to confirm or disconfirm the findings from this study. Studies which replicate this research or extend this research will add to the field of SER at the middle school level.
- Additional research at schools which implement interdisciplinary teaming is called for to further expand the findings from this study. Since only five schools in this study implemented interdisciplinary teaming, a study which includes a larger sample of schools incorporating this concept may yield more definitive results. Moreover, interdisciplinary teaming emerged from this study and was not initially a focus of the re-

search. A study which is designed to primarily examine teaming will expand the field of research regarding the effectiveness of teaming as a middle school concept.

- Additional research in teacher socialization at the elementary and secondary levels is needed to broaden this area of school effectiveness research. As this study was limited to schools at the middle level, generalizations to the secondary or elementary level should be used cautiously. Research specifically targeting the secondary or elementary school level will yield teacher socialization research across a broader spectrum of SER.
- Additional research should be conducted on student teaching programs to determine the types of placements and experiences that best prepare student teachers to assume the responsibilities of being a teacher.

Recommendations for Policy

Future policy mandates should consider the following:

- State mandated assistance/assessment programs should be frequently monitored by state departments to ensure the program is being implemented as originally intended. Specifically, overseers of these programs should be certain that mentors are providing all types of assistance as covered in the mentor training manual and as recommended by research, rather than targeting only one aspect of mentoring, which is, in most cases, the final assessment.
- State mandated assistance/assessment programs should minimize paperwork associated with the programs so that the components of the program intended to support new teachers remain the priority. An audit of the required paperwork might reveal some extraneous demands which could be eliminated or merged with existing forms.
- District school systems should insure that new teacher inductions are extensive and profitable for the beginners. Districts might conduct follow up evaluations with new teachers to determine the needs for future inductions. These inductions might include more emphasis on professional development as well as the day to day routines of teaching, rather than singularly emphasizing assessment. Moreover, districts should implement an additional program to induct new teachers who begin employment after the first month of school. One new teacher induction per year is insufficient for the needs of teachers who are hired throughout the year.

Recommendations for Practice

Future school practice should consider the following:

- Principals should take an active role in the induction of new teachers, including frequent discussion, monitoring, and feedback regarding professional practice. Fulfilling the minimum requirements as mandated by the state will result in a minimally proficient staff. Principals who take seriously their role as instructional leader can do much to shape an effective teaching staff in a school climate geared to learning.
- Principals should refrain from relegating all aspects of new teacher induction to the mentor. Principals are a vital part of the socialization experience and should not remove themselves from the process. Brock and Grady (1998) point out that principal expectations of the new teacher is a vital component of the socialization process. Frequent and meaningful contact with the beginner will enable the principal to help the novice become a productive part of the school organization.
- When possible and/or notwithstanding a shortage of teachers in the area, principals should assign mentors to new teachers based on like subject matter and provide mutual time for the mentor and new teacher to meet. By doing so, mentors will have a closer working relationship with the novice throughout the initial year.
- Principals should refrain from assigning outside duties to mentors in order that the new teacher can become the priority for the mentor. Limiting outside duties will allow the mentor time which can be devoted to the new teacher.
- Mentors should provide assistance to the "whole person" of the new teacher; that is, professional, instructional, emotional, and collegial assistance. Targeting only the instructional components measured for the state assessment is insufficient in supporting the new teacher to the necessary growth and development as a teacher.
- Colleges of Education should examine their teacher preparation programs to ensure that students are receiving adequate preparation in instruction and classroom management to prepare them for the realities of the classroom and the needs of students.

- Colleges of Education should consider expanding the student teaching experience to one year, with the second semester to include a "real world" experience. A possible experience might be work as a school substitute for college credit. This will provide experience for the teacher/intern and provide budget relief for systems who pay for substitutes.

Summary

As previously stated, a school which is more effective or less effective breeds itself. Principals, mentors, and the naive beginning teachers did not set out to poorly lead, poorly mentor, or poorly teach. The abilities of the children and the academics in the classroom played only a minuscule role in the overall effectiveness of the middle schools in this study. The health or illness of the school culture in which they found themselves transferred that health or illness to the members of the community who work there. In the cases of the schools in this study, the healthy atmosphere or the sick building syndrome had a direct impact on the socialization experiences of these beginning teachers.

Results from a priori themes included the level and quality of mentoring assistance, administrative monitoring, collegial team building, effective instruction, intent to stay, challenges and successes of the new teacher, and new teacher perception of interdisciplinary teaming. Emerging themes focused on the roles played by elements of the new teacher experience, including the role of the principal, the role of the mentor, and the role of the new teacher's university preparation program. Conclusions resulting from this study are as follows: (1) pre-service university programs are not adequately preparing student teachers for the realities of today's classrooms, particularly in classroom management; (2) interdisciplinary teaming, if implemented to increase professional and collegial development, can substantially aid new teachers during the socialization process; (3) effective teacher socialization is the result of the organizational processes within the school, rather than the result of the individual components of mentoring assistance, administrative monitoring, and collegial team building.

Practitioners and policy makers can benefit from the knowledge which help to bridge the gap between school effects and teacher effects. Closing this gap in knowledge will support school districts in their school improvement efforts, specifically in the area of teacher induction. This study, while addressing constructs related to teachers, also has implications for students. The primary concern for schools is the promotion of the child's growth and development, and academic achievement, all which are stunted by frequent changes in the teaching staff, by teachers who teach out of their field because of shortages, or by teachers who are too emotionally and physically exhausted to be effective in the classroom. Understanding the school contexts which provide a beneficial socialization experience for the new teacher can help principals and district office personnel focus on those elements in the school improvement process.

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